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ピアノの森 16

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The Perfect World of KAI

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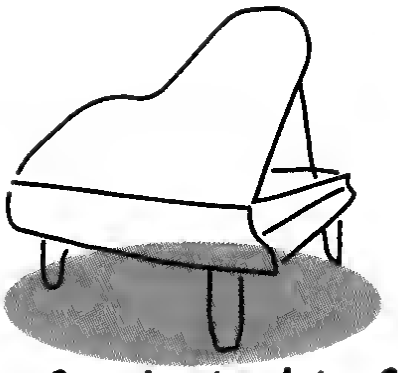

The Perfect World of KAI

16

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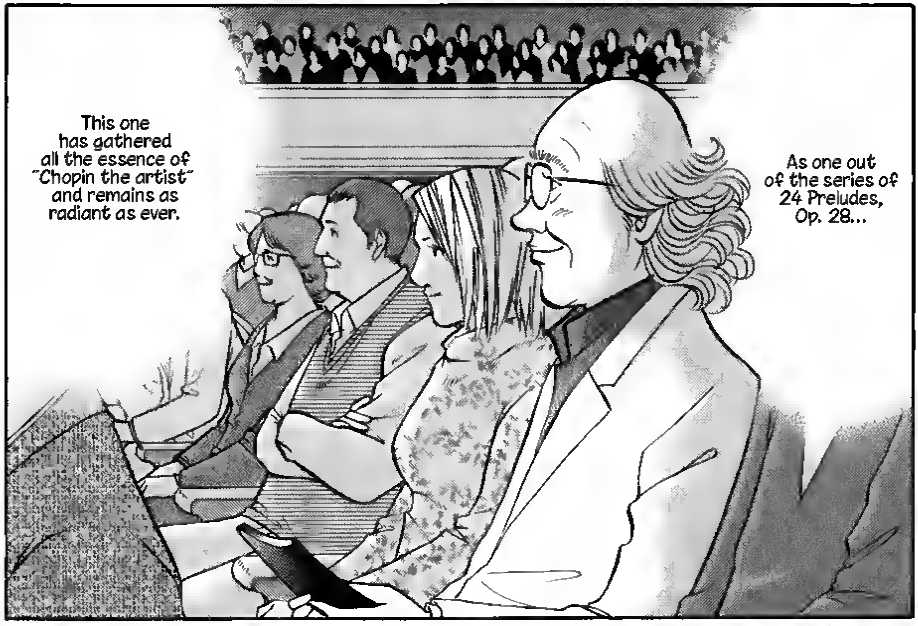
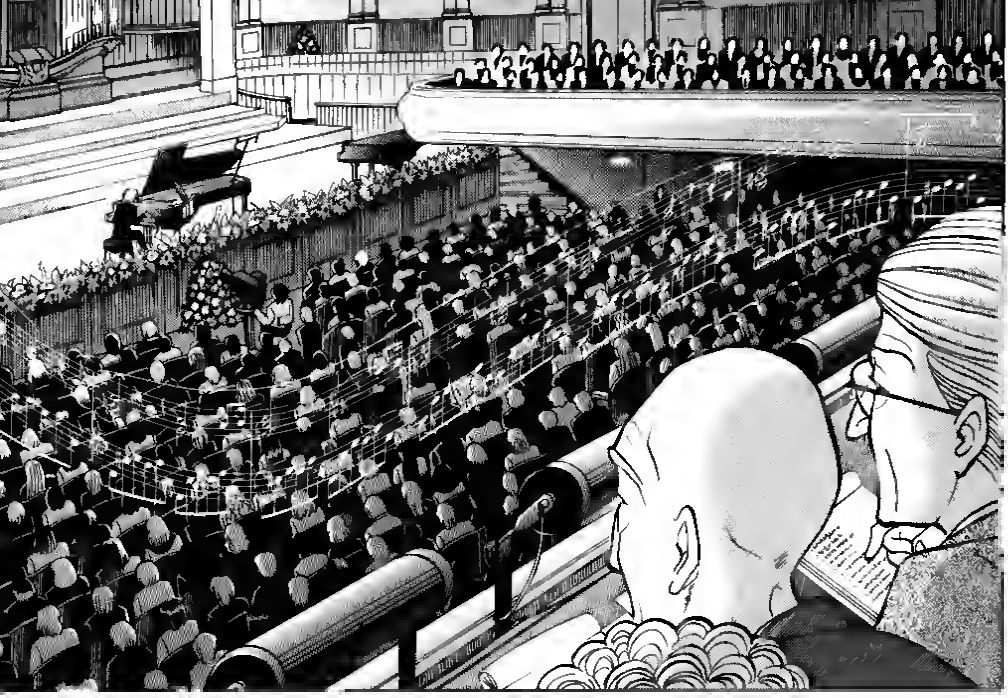
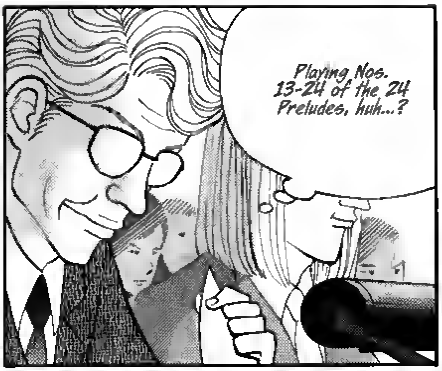
Chapter 139 Prelude

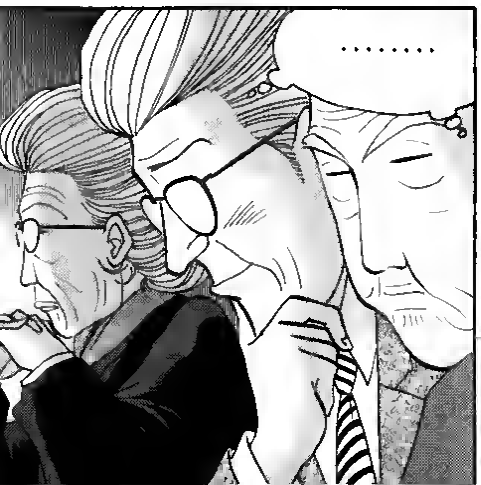
STEINWAY & SONS
PRELUDES, OP. 28
PRELUDE NO. 13 IN F SHARP MAJOR


This one has gathered all the essence of "Chopin the artist" and remains as radiant as ever.
As one out of the series of 24 Preludes, Op. 28...



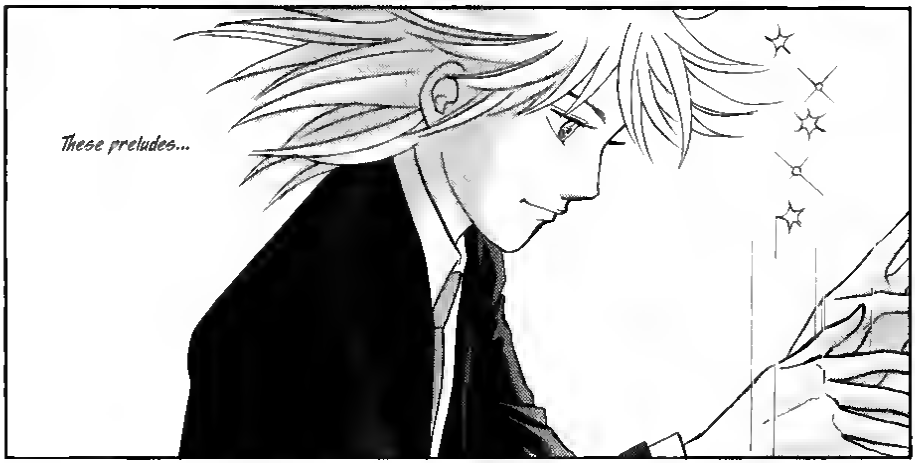
This selection is like a continuation of the Nos. 7-12 Szymanowski played.

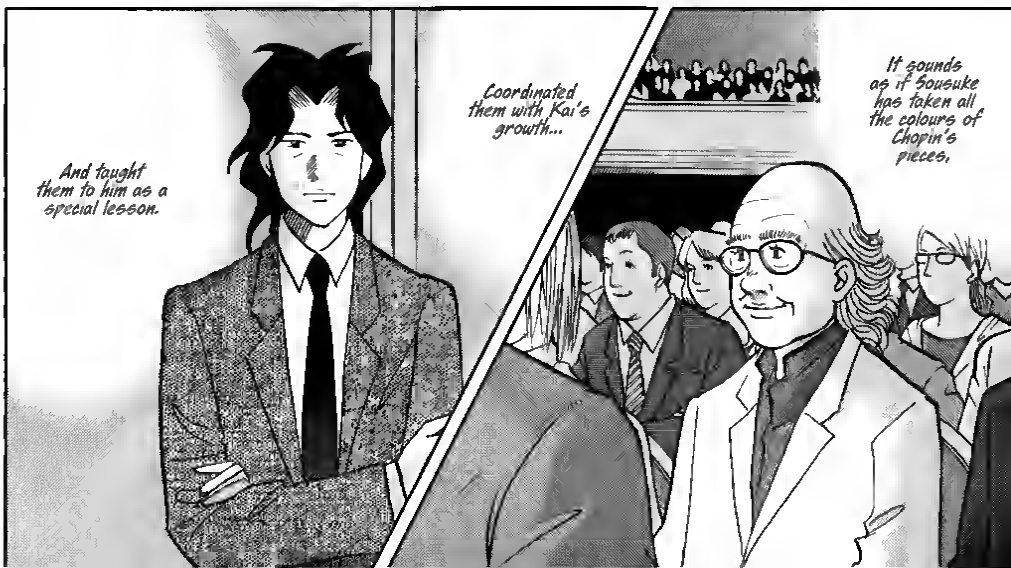

Playing Nos. 13-24 of the 24 Preludes, huh...?


.....

Especially since the second half of the pieces are all so dramatic.
The individual pieces themselves are short; the hard part is how to bring the selection as a whole to life...

....
....


These preludes...

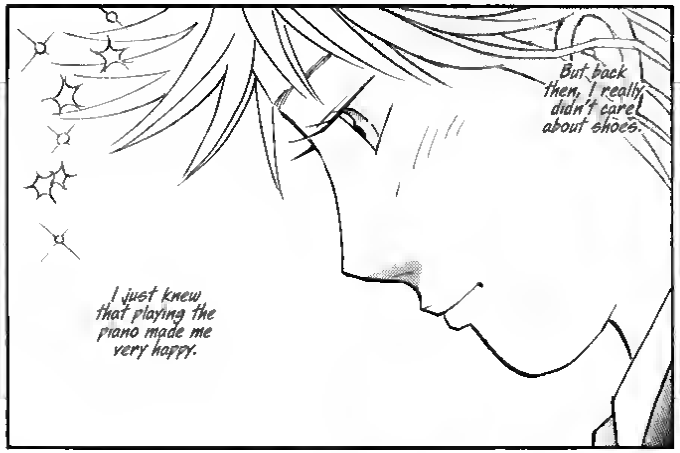

And taught them to him as a special lesson.
Coordinated them with Kai's growth...
It sounds as if Sousuke has taken all the colours of Chopin's pieces.

Shoes?
I should be able to manage if it's about the piano...
Speaking of lesson...
Hehe...
That's why I decided to let him participate in the competition, and see how he'll do.
Yeah....
I've finally trained him not to take off his shoes until he finishes playing.
He was criticised for this during his first competition,
When Kai gets serious, he'll unconsciously take off his shoes...
?
So I trained him quite a bit to correct him before this one.

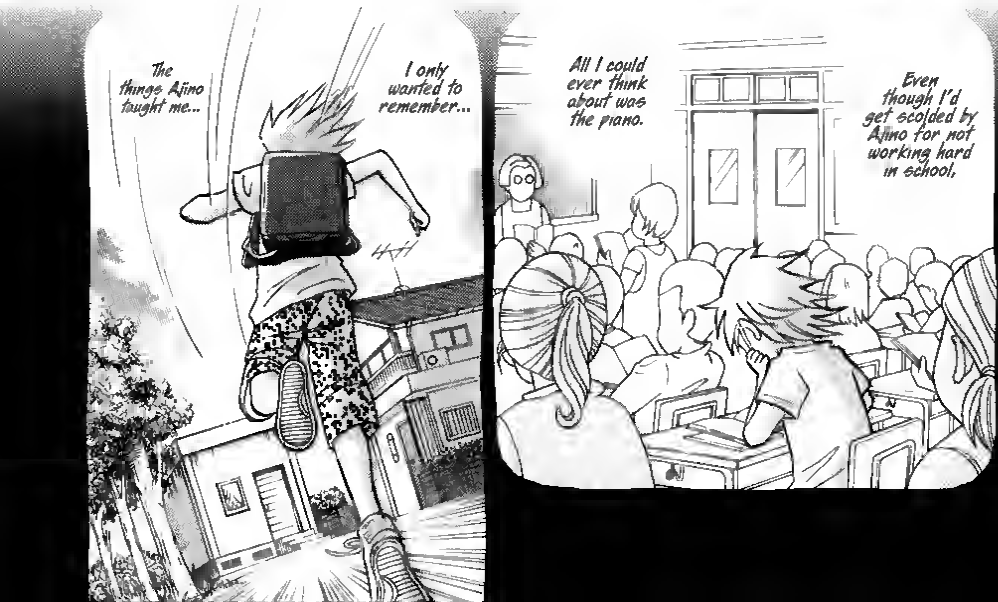
We tried using shoes you couldn't slip out of,
But none of them worked.
I'd given him ballet shoes...
I'd given him shaes that had holes.
And in the end, make a mess of his playing...
But by the time he reached the middle of the song, he'd have lost his concentration...
Ha?
The incident's about the shoes really were funny.

Rei-chan...
I don't want you to dirty the house.
I don't like them! At least take off the plastic bags!
wear shoes inside the house.
even made me...
But when I really started to cry, she'd let me take them off...
It's because I'm wearing these...
わあぁん!
ぐすっ

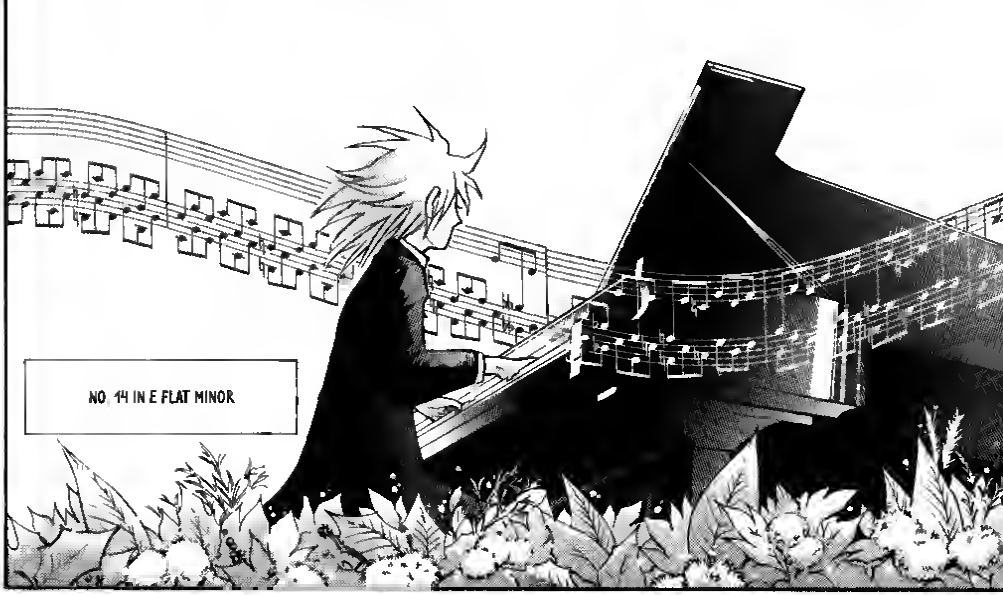
In the end, I could finally play the piano with my shoes on...
since only two years ago.

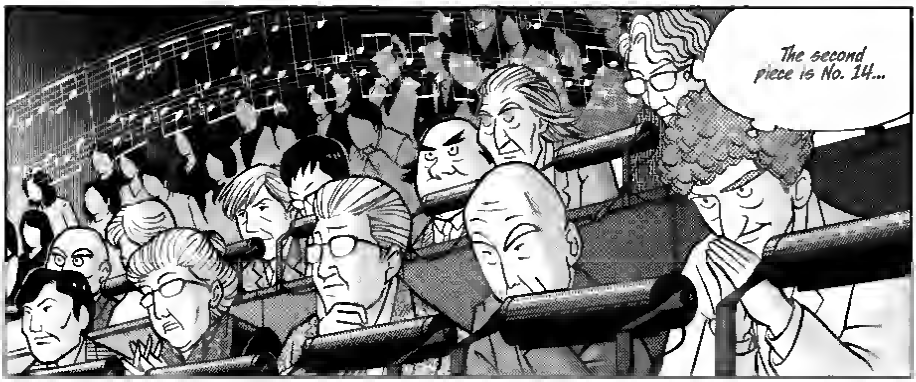

But back then, I really didn't care about shoes.
I just knew that playing the piano made me very happy.

I didn't know Kai was such a wild child.
Really?


The things Ajimo taught me...
I only wanted to remember...
All I could ever think about was the piano.
Even though I'd get scolded by Ajimo for not working hard in school.

Wah... What is this?! My fingers can't reach!
They mes-merized me.
All the songs he taught me made me happy.
CHOP
Though it's a technically easy piece, hidden within are melodies very difficult to express...
It's still too early for No. 14, so learn No. 15 first.
At home, I would play a paper piano during my free time.
But playing the harder ones was even more interesting!
Easy pieces were interesting...
Bo bo bo ba ba ba
Pa!
Ah! You broke it again...


NO. 14 IN E FLAT MINOR


The second piece is No. 14...

When I get serious, I lose track of time.

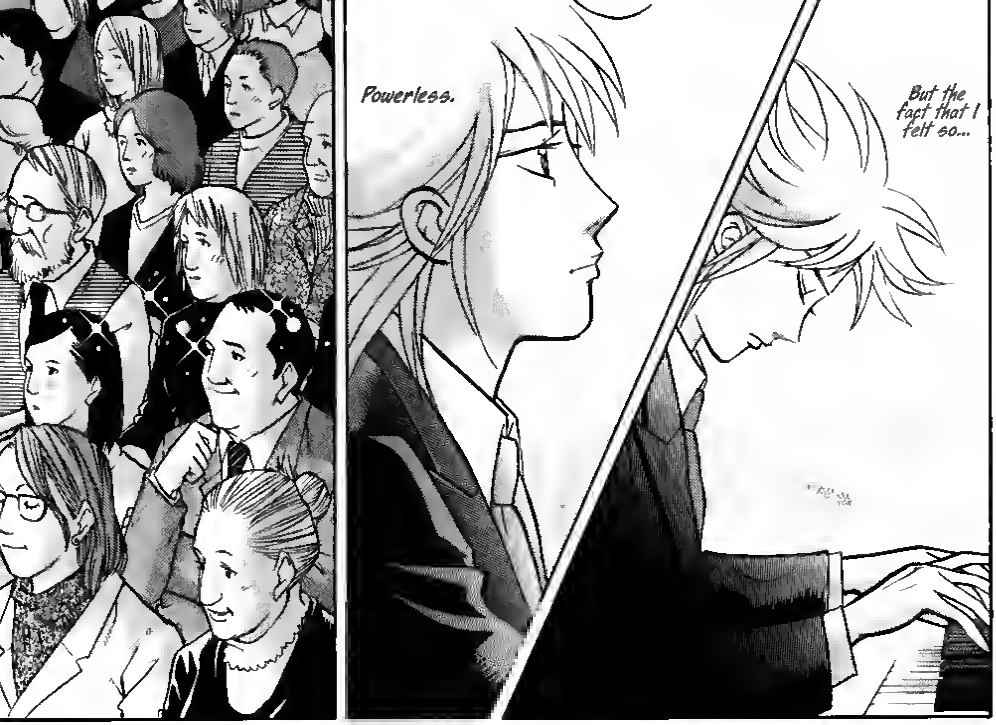
The image given is like the coming of a storm...

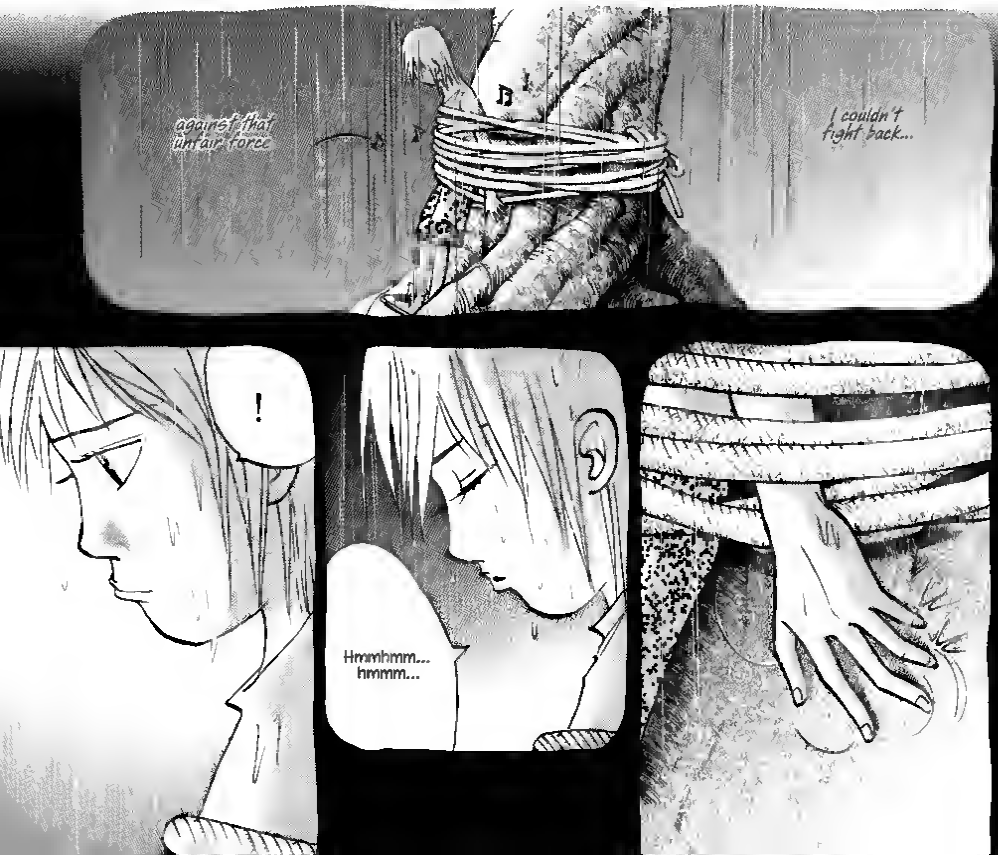
Wait, Kai!
Then Sensei, I'll see you tomorrow.
Ah! It's already this late.
Huh?
Were you making those paper keyboards...
Hahaha, of course not!
during your lesson again?

Ah... It's raining.
I could only think about the piano at that time.
I know I won't get food.
I'm sorry, I'll start work right away.
You're late today.

Really?
Eh?
Then I can practise the piano!
But you don't have to work today.
Hahaha, of course you won't be getting food.
Stop right there!
I don't know what you're always so happy about,
But you have to be punished.
And such a pity, no one will help you today.
The fact that I have to let you off to go to school is annoying enough.
I heard you've been slacking off recently when you work.

The hardest part wasn't getting hit by the pouring rain,
or being tied up,
NO. 15 IN D FLAT MAJOR.
RAINDROP PRELUDE

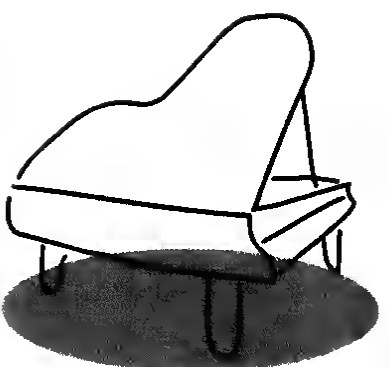

Powerless.
But the fact that I felt so...


against that unfair force
I couldn't fight back...
!
Hmmhmm... hmmm...

Chopin's feelings now...
I can sort of understand...
I...
Yes...
Ah...
What he was feeling when he wrote his "Raindrop Prelude".
The shadow of death...
An inescapable fate.
...!

I could never grasp it...
No matter how many times Ajino explained it to me,
It's such a happy song...
...but ridden with darkness...
Uncertainty...
Sorry, Chopin.
Sniff...
I...
Yaaaawn
I'd never have been able to understand you if not for this hardship.

Prelude END



The Perfect World of KAI

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PIANO NO MORI

by ISSHIKI Makoto
一色まこと

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Piano no Mori ch 139

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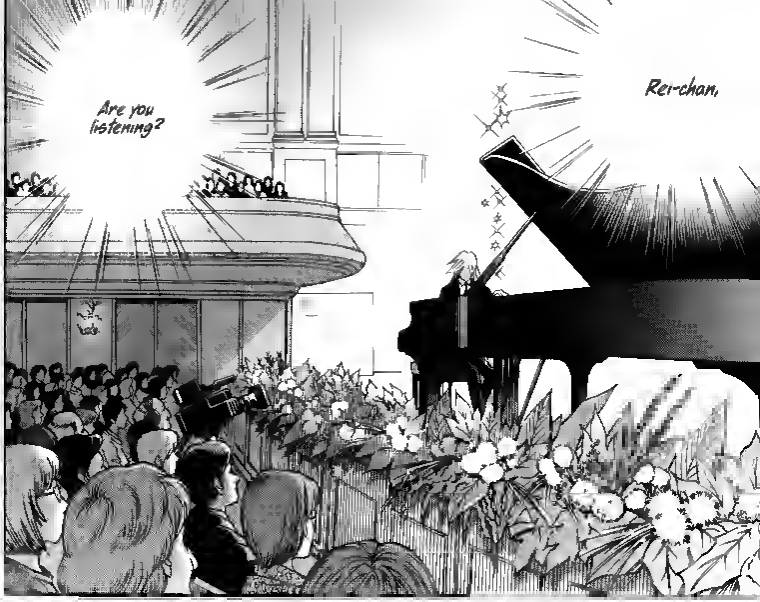
Chapter 140 Our Chopin

Kai's paper keyboard...
カン
カン
A shoe?
KAI-!!!
Kai!!

How long have you been here?
What happened? Who did this?!
Ah... Rei-chan,
It's daytime already.
Huh?
I chose to be here.
I'm fine. Calm down.
Don't worry, I won't be late next time...
W-what?
The old lady said that to punish me for being late, I had to choose between having my fingers cut off and being tied to a tree for the whole night.

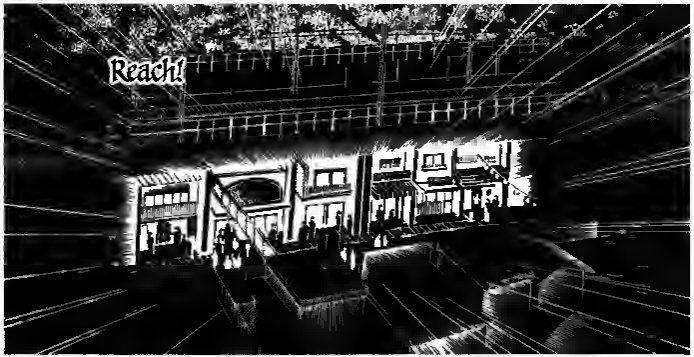
I understand Chopin's feelings when he wrote the "Raindrop Prelude"...
And because of this, I finally understand!!
But it is!
That's not the problem here.
Kai...
I'll definitely be able to play even better now!
Rei-chan,
I wouldn't have been the only one in trouble. They would definitely have threatened Rei-chan with "We'll cut off Kai's fingers!" too.
I haven't started playing well yet, you can stop crying.
If those people knew that I was learning the piano,

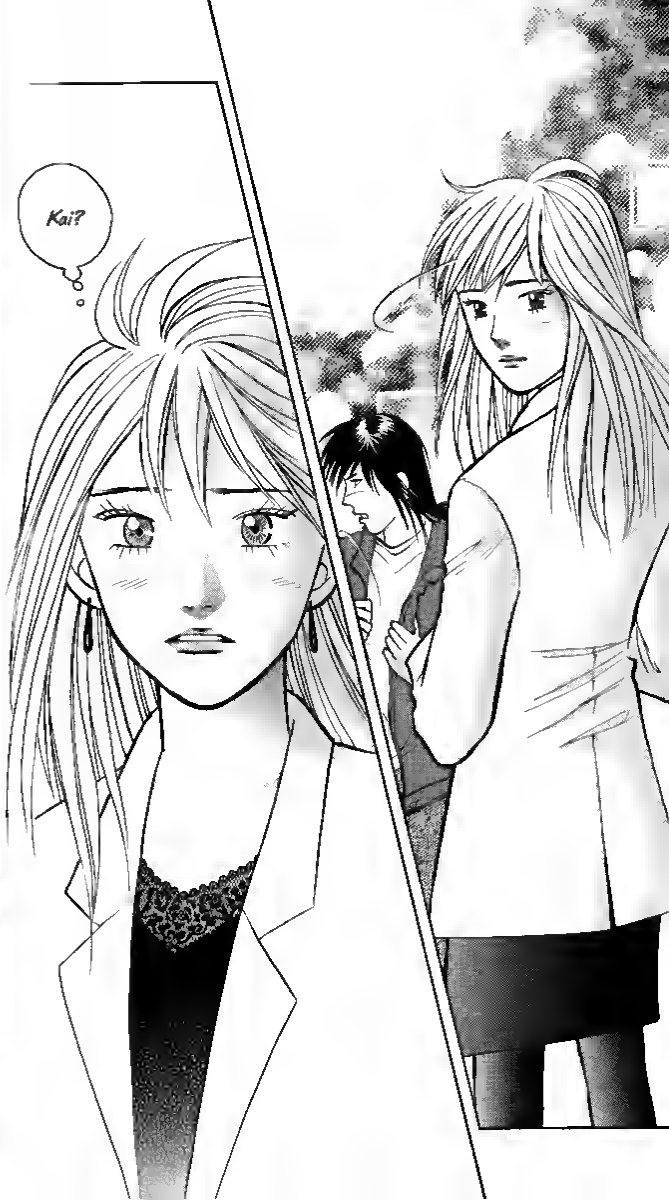
Rei-chan...
It's only because of Rei-chan's protection
That my fingers are all still intact.


Are you listening?
Rei-chan.

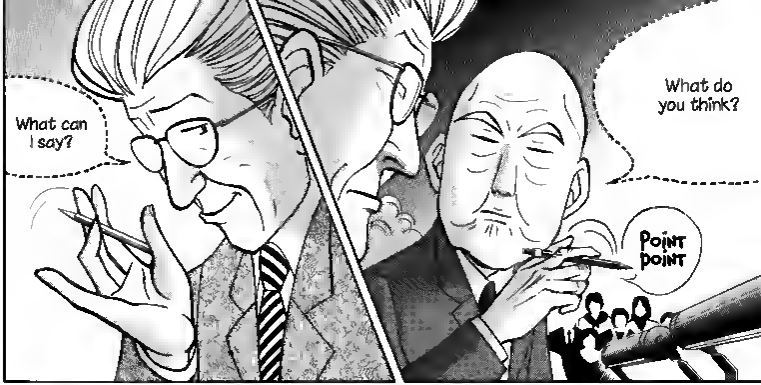
I hope these notes will reach you, Rei-chan...
This is your favorite, "Raindrop Prelude."
Reach!

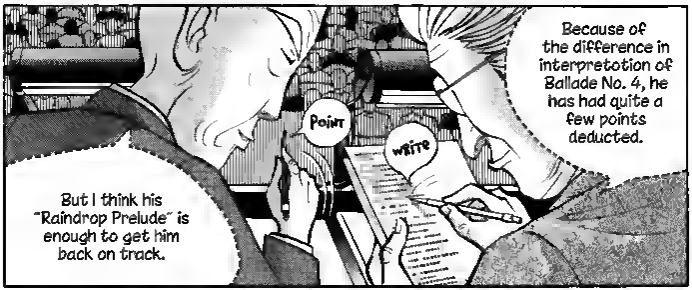
Reach!


Reach!


Kai?

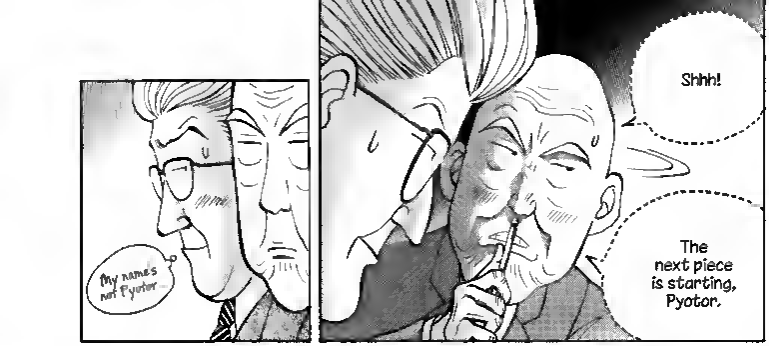
Wow...♡
To us professionals, the "Raindrop Prelude" would normally be rather dreary, but...
This feels so fresh!
Such a brilliant rendition...
Click.

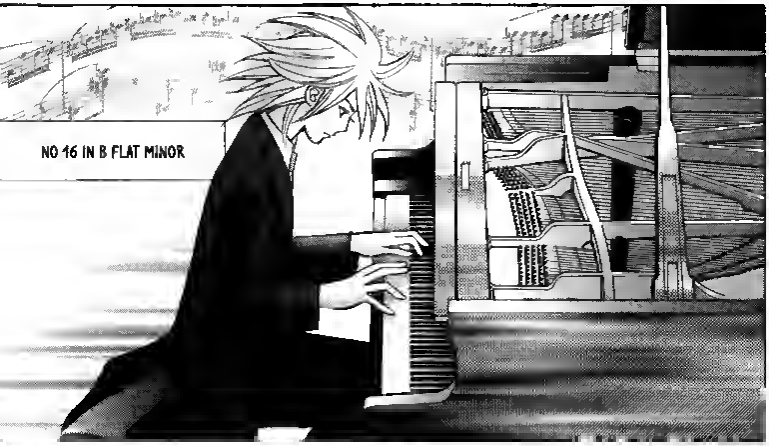

What can I say?
What do you think?
Point
Point

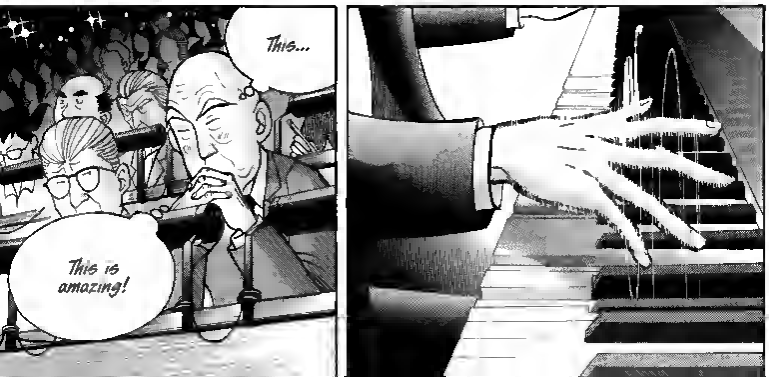

Point
write
Because of the difference in interpretotion of Ballade No. 4, he has had quite a few points deducted.
But I think his "Raindrop Prelude" is enough to get him back on track.

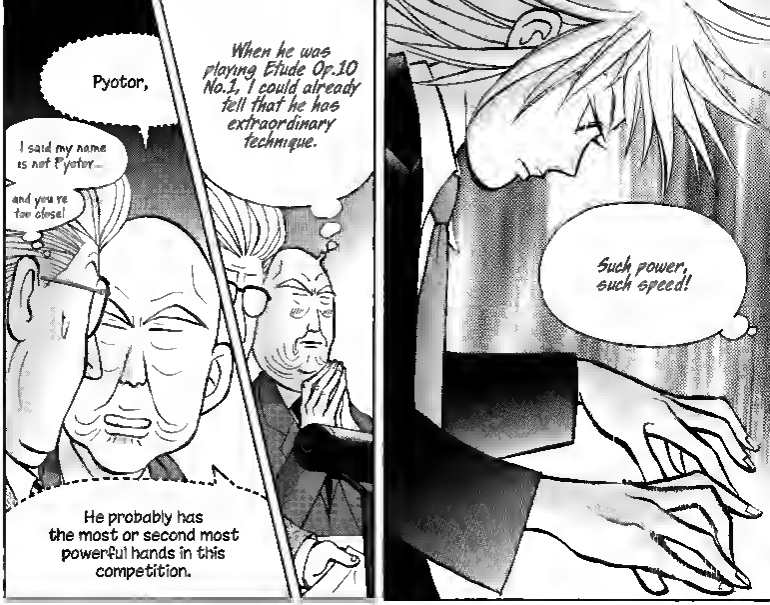
The real question is whether or not his playing can bring out "Our Chopin".
PIOTR WEBER (POLAND)

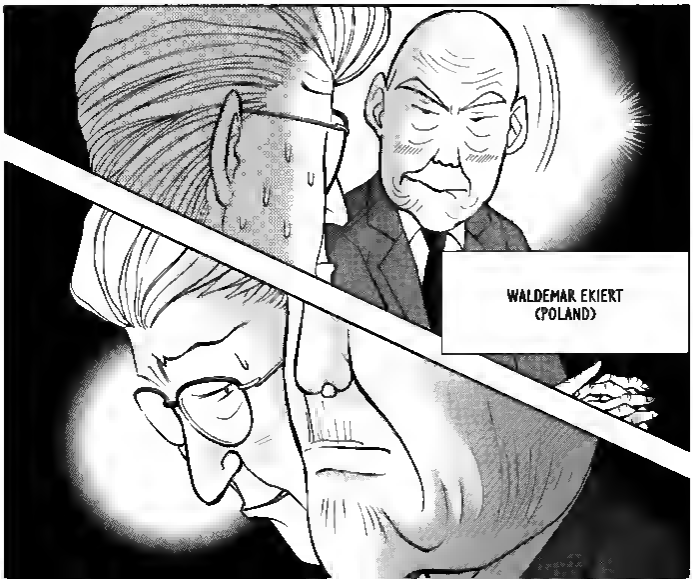
I guess we just have to listen til the last note...

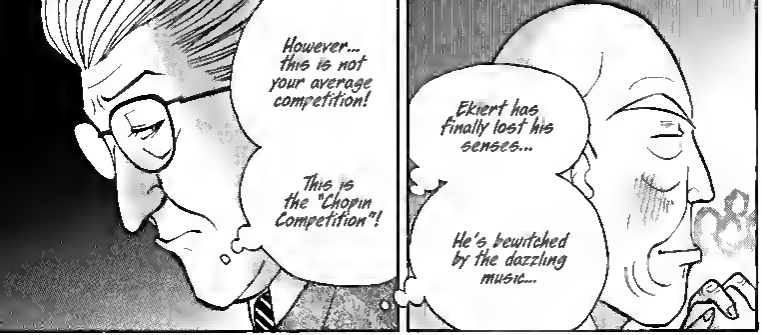

My name's not Pyotor
Shhh!
The next piece is starting, Pyotor.


NO 16 IN B FLAT MINOR

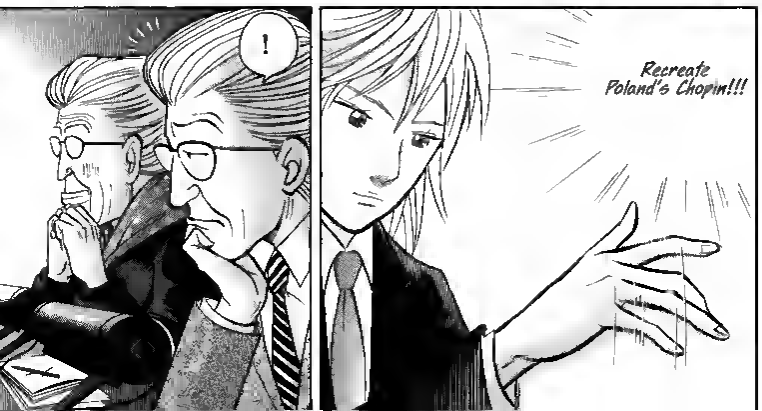

This...
This is amazing!

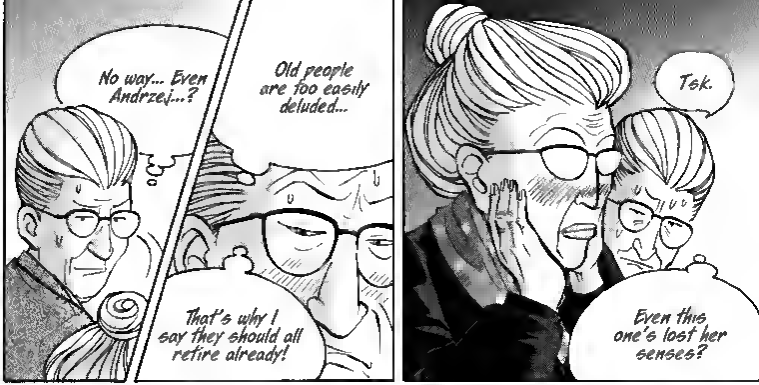

Pyotor,
I said my name is not Pyotor...
and you're too close!
When he was playing Etude Op.10 No.1, I could already tell that he has extraordinary technique.
He probably has the most or second most powerful hands in this competition.
Such power, such speed!


WALDEMAR EKIERT
(POLAND)


However... this is not your average competition!
This is the "Chopin Competition"!
Ekiert has finally lost his senses...
He's bewitched by the dazzling music...

The point will always be to see if the player can...
NO.17 IN A FLAT MAJOR


!
Recreate Poland's Chopin!!!


No way... Even Andrzej...?
Old people are too easily deluded...
That's why I say they should all retire already!
Tsk.
Even this one's lost her senses?

I can never tell what he's thinking.
ANDRZEJ PAVLAS
(POLAND / VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE JUDGING PANEL)

Before the competition, he'd declared this to be "a Chopin Competition held in honor of Chopin, for the sake of Chopin".
But there shouldn't be any problem. He's a level-headed man,
he won't be tricked so easily.
After all, Shuhei Amamiya is Andrzej's only Japanese student.
And if he were to support a Japanese contestant, Shuhei Amamiya would probably be his first choice.
But since teachers are not allowed to judge their own students...

If it's another Japanese contestant
STEINWAY & SONS
NO. 18 IN F MINOR

who may be a threat to his own student, he'll probably be harsher in his scoring.
Our Chopin / END

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PIANO NO MORI

by ISSHIKI Makoto
一色まこと

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The central judging criterion will always be...
to see whether the player can recreate

Chapter 141

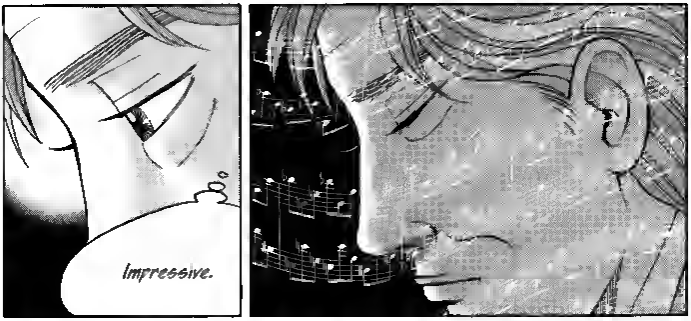
Ajino's Battle

"Poland's Chopin"!!

24 PRELUDES OP.28
NO.19 IN E MINOR

This boy...

Putting judging criteria aside...
No.37, Kai Ichinose...


Impressive.

Although there were some minor mistakes, they were very inconspicuous.
Is it because all the important notes were played perfectly?

Amamiya Jr.'s precision makes his performance breathtaking...
Kai Ichinose may not be on his level in this regard, but his playing is really pleasing to the ear.

I had already foreseen this...
But I never thought he would be this good...
Just what kind of training did he undergo?
To acquire such skills...
I can only say it must have taken
extremely long, intensive and vigorous training.
Ajino.
NO 20 IN C MAJOR

When you decided to take on Kai as your student.
I think... our battle started...

Remember to do your homework!
See you tomorrow, Sensei!
Oh no, it's this late already!
CHOPIN
So I still hoped he would maintain his studies in school.
I know!
Kai didn't have as much free time as other kids his age.
can't actually help him much.
Using the paper keyboard for practising at home...
To Kai, who has lost the piano in the forest,
More importantly...

leave his job at "the other side of the forest"...
I hoped to help Kai...

of "the other side of the forest",
to have him break free...
And more importantly,

and let him grow as he will.

why not just adopt Kai?
If that's the case, Sousuke,
and you can obtain the legal rights to protect him.
That way, Kai can leave that isolated environment.
Music Room
Sensei,
There's a guest for you.
I have thought of it, but it's not that easy.

Just now, a pretty lady was here to look for sensei.
I asked her to wait here though.
Ah? She's not here.
When she heard...
that Kai was tied to a tree overnight
Ichinose-san!
I... I don't know what to do...
just because he was late.

If Kai continues to stay here,
What will happen to him?
Even though it was just to scare him...
Ichinose-san!
Would you and Kai...
Wha...
Would the two of you like to come with me?

What if you become my god-daughter...
I know Kai won't leave you at "the other end of the forest".
So I've been thinking,
Ah... Like an adopted daughter.
Your... Daughter...
If it's Kai, I wouldn't mind, but I'm already an adult...
Haha...
Your are still young enough to be my child.
This is...
Please let me protect the two of you.
At least until you gain your freedom.

I-It s impossible.
I do not have the freedom to live anywhere beyond "the other side of the forest".
...
Kai is just a child, so the others won t go after him if he leaves. But no matter where I run, they will hunt me down.
If Sensei adopts me, then the people from "the other side of the forest" will also go after you.
She...

Indeed, at that time, I had yet to understand...
the special rules of "the other side of the forest".
As if we were in a different time period, and not in modern Japan
made it sound like she really couldn't take a single step beyond the brothel...
?
Then, let's go and fight for Kai's basic rights.
I understand.
S... Sensei, stop!
They're very dangerous people!
Even if it wasn't for that, Kai is still entitled to compulsory education, and should not have to work.
We have to negotiate for him to get more free time so he can practise more.

暁
To say I wasn't scared would be a lie.
Confrontations can't be won through common sense...
My anger helped me overcome my fear...
But...

I see...
Not observing labour law...
Even child abuse, you say?
We have no choice then...
Being nagged by a stubborn teacher sure is annoying...
Many negotiations followed after that...
But somehow, I managed to get Kai more time to practise.

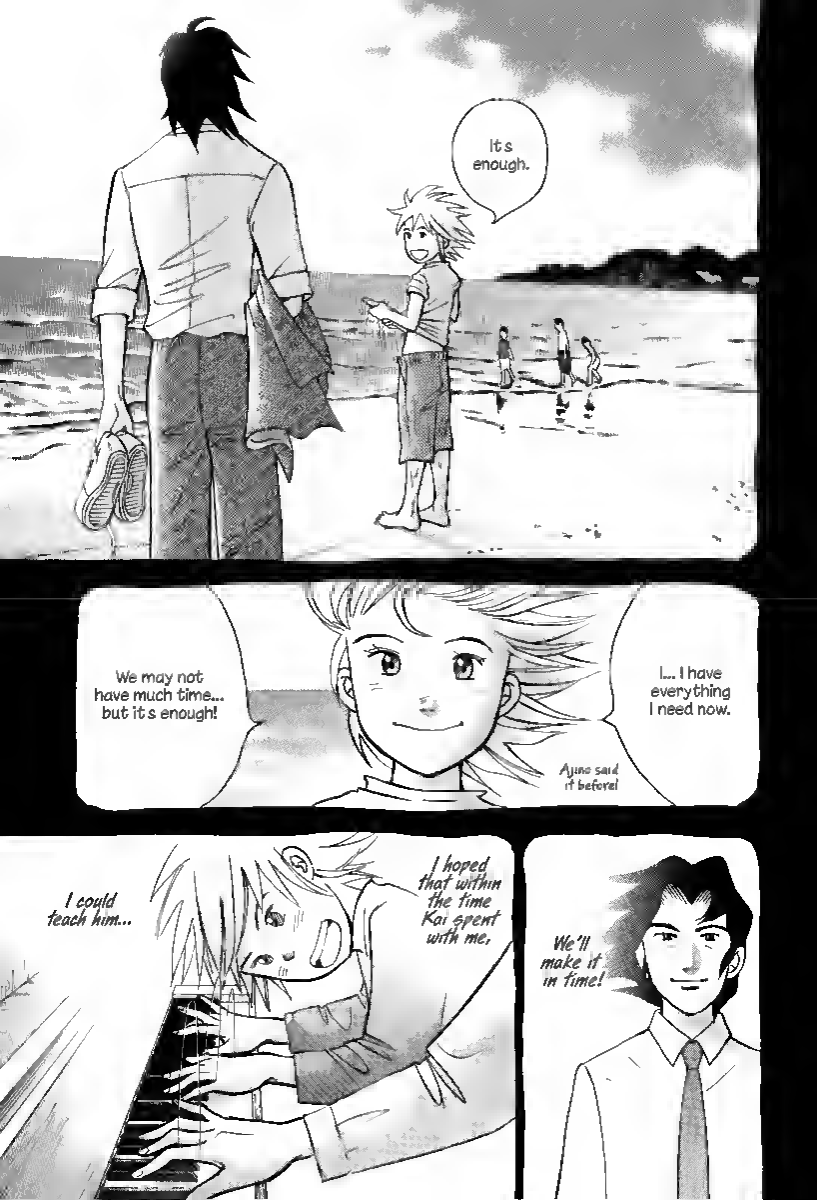
Every time I tried to fight for Kai's rights...
But after that...
NO 22 IN C MINOR

People from "the other side of the forest" would keep getting in the way.

We would love to accept him, but the Parent-Teacher Association is not happy about it..
All of them rejected Kai...
Every school with a music room...
Every school with music as a subject...
Even the high schools within the district...
instead of coming straight at us...
S-Sense, even if you do this, there's nothing we can do...

They all made excuses ...
Kai will always be bound to the accursed "other side of the forest".
If we don't get as far away as possible from this place...
Aren't high schools supposed to offer compulsory education?
that one day, he could fly away from this place!
I hoped...

Not only things concerning piano keys,
but also my knowledge and experience...
There were many things that I wanted to teach him.
I would be able to teach him everything I know.
I hoped that within the time Kai spent with me,
It still was not enough.
No matter how much time we had...
But...


It's enough.
We may not have much time... but it's enough!
Ajino said it before!
I... I have everything I need now.
I could teach him...
I hoped that within the time Kai spent with me,
We'll make it in time!

Everything I know!!

The last piece, No. 24...
Allegro Apassionato...
How will you perform this song?
Ajino's Battle END

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PIANO NO MORI

by ISSHIKI Makoto
一色まこと

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Piano no Mori ch 141

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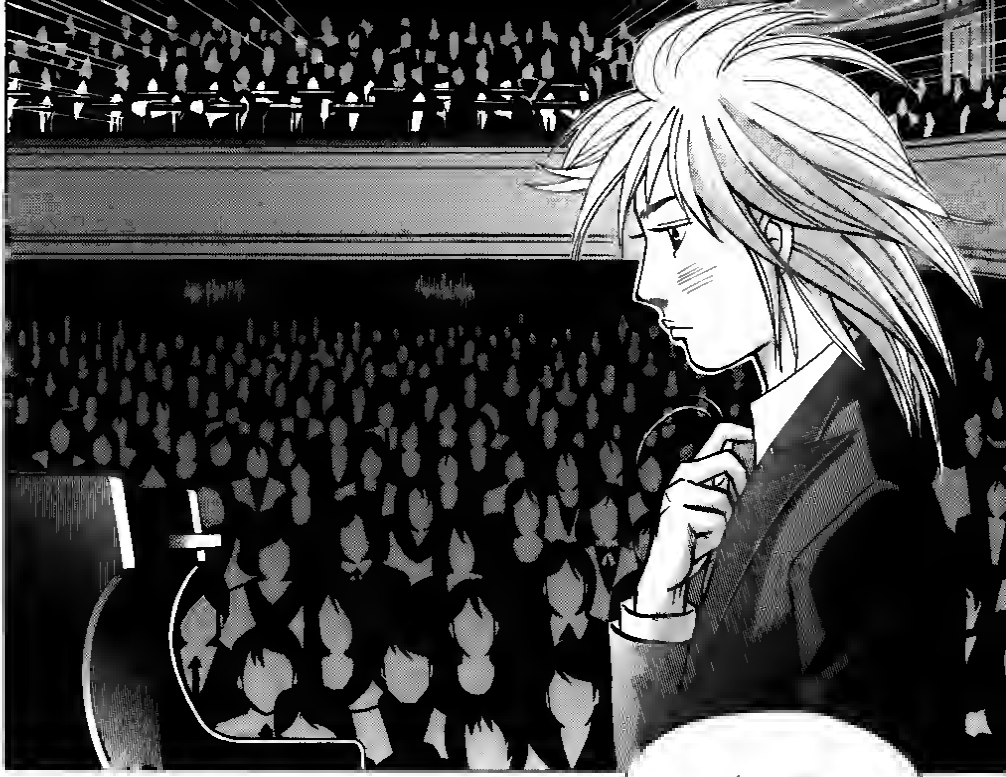
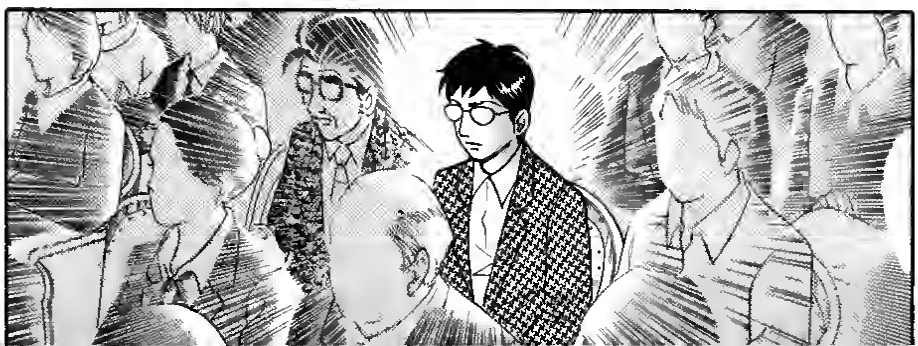
Chapter 142

fff (Fortississimo)



The next will be the last piece, Prelude No. 24
How will you play this one... Ichinose?!!



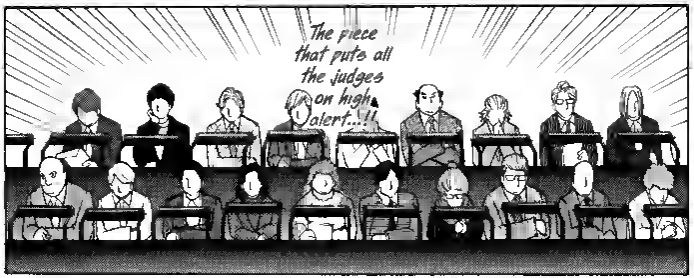
It's...
It's the one piece that I still haven't gotten Pavlas-sensei's approval.
No 24 in D Minor...
Yes.
Remove...?
The essential sound quality?
You cannot produce the essential sound quality, especially in the case of No.24.
Even though you have no problem playing the Preludes, you should still remove them from your list of set pieces.

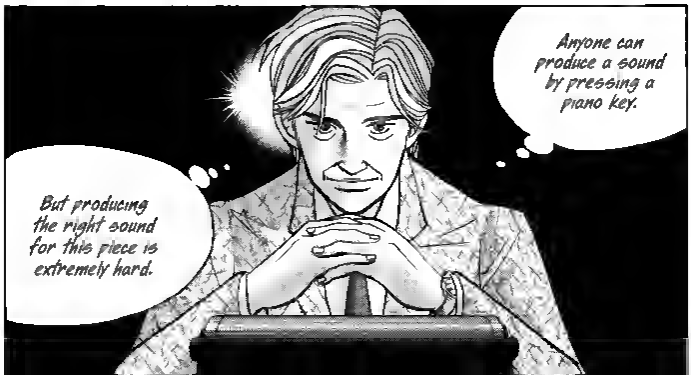
But the judges would be very critical on the Preludes, especially No.24.
Nothing will get past them
Your techniques are incredible! You must have practiced really hard.
Even if all the notes are played correctly... A bland performance goes against the very essence of the piece
Many performers would therefore try to reflect them by playing up their own emotions
rendering the performance over the top and exaggerated.
The sorrow... The pain... The joy...
cannot be expressed merely by putting in your own emotions.

I find that a bit unsightly.
Of course, not having any technique is out of the question
Once you've reached your limit, you can only aim for the technically challenging pieces.
But with only technique, then no matter where you go, technique is all it'll ever be
That is certainly commendable but...
Even an auto piano can play them
Then...
Then what should I do to bring out this essential "sound quality"?

Do you think you can do it?
Yes.
If it's that...
Hmm...
If I must say, I guess... you need to listen to your own music
I wonder.
To be honest, I think most pianists cannot listen to their own playing objectively.
That's it for today
Play No.24 for me again next time.
If you could really do it, then you'd already be at the level of a maestro

Kai,
How will you play


The piece that puts all the judges on high alert...!!

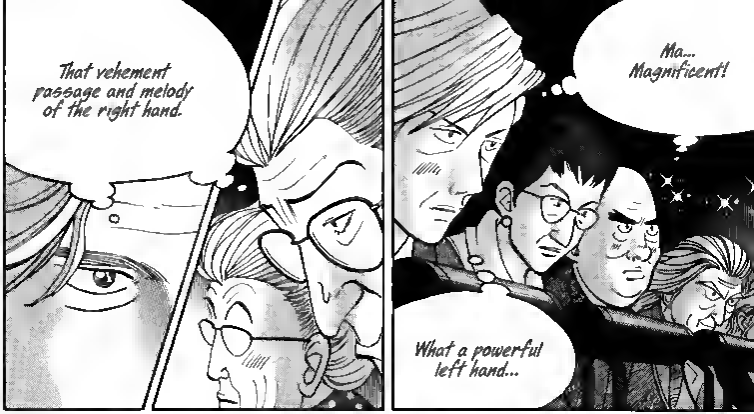

Anyone can produce a sound by pressing a piano key.
But producing the right sound for this piece is extremely hard.

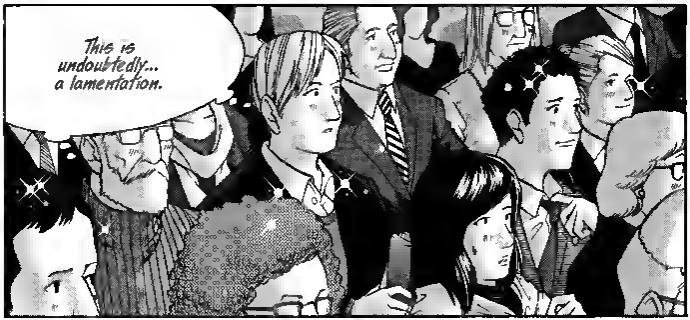
So how is it going to be, Kai Ichinose?!
How will you play this song?!
The final cry of the hero...
The lamentation...!!
The life and death recounted in the song...
How will you present them?!
Kai...

Ichinose!!
Ajino.
24 PRELUDES, OP.28
NO.24 IN D MINOR

Kai,
Adversities will always push you forward.
Ajino-sensei!!

Most definitely!
They have all certainly become your power.
The energy of all your anger, your pain...





*T/N FFF= FORTISSISSIMO= SUPER SUPER STRONG NOTE > FF > F

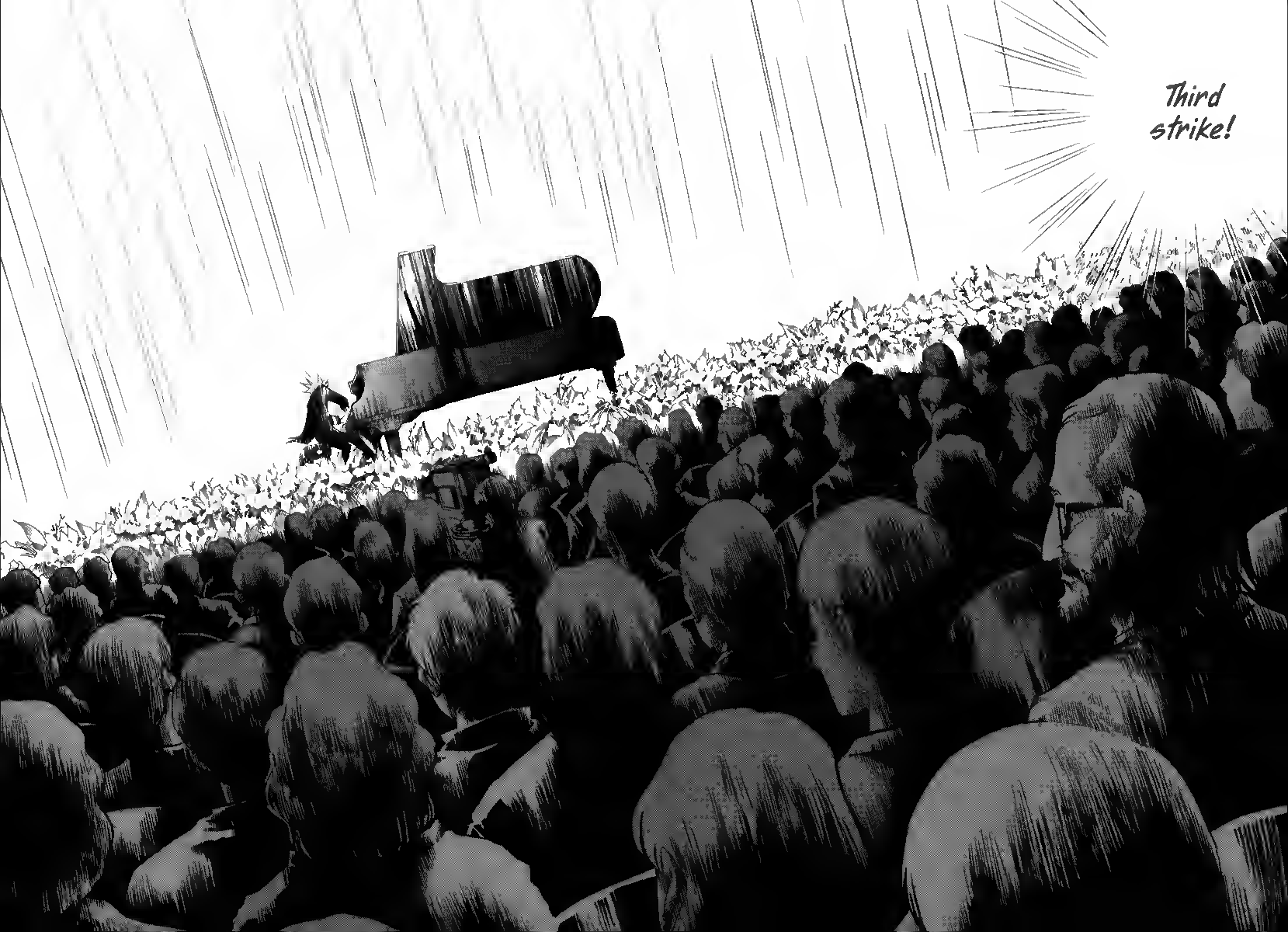
Let us hear your final heroic cry...
At the very end are 3 consecutive fff* strikes on the lowest D...
To end the piece as if you were on your very last breath...

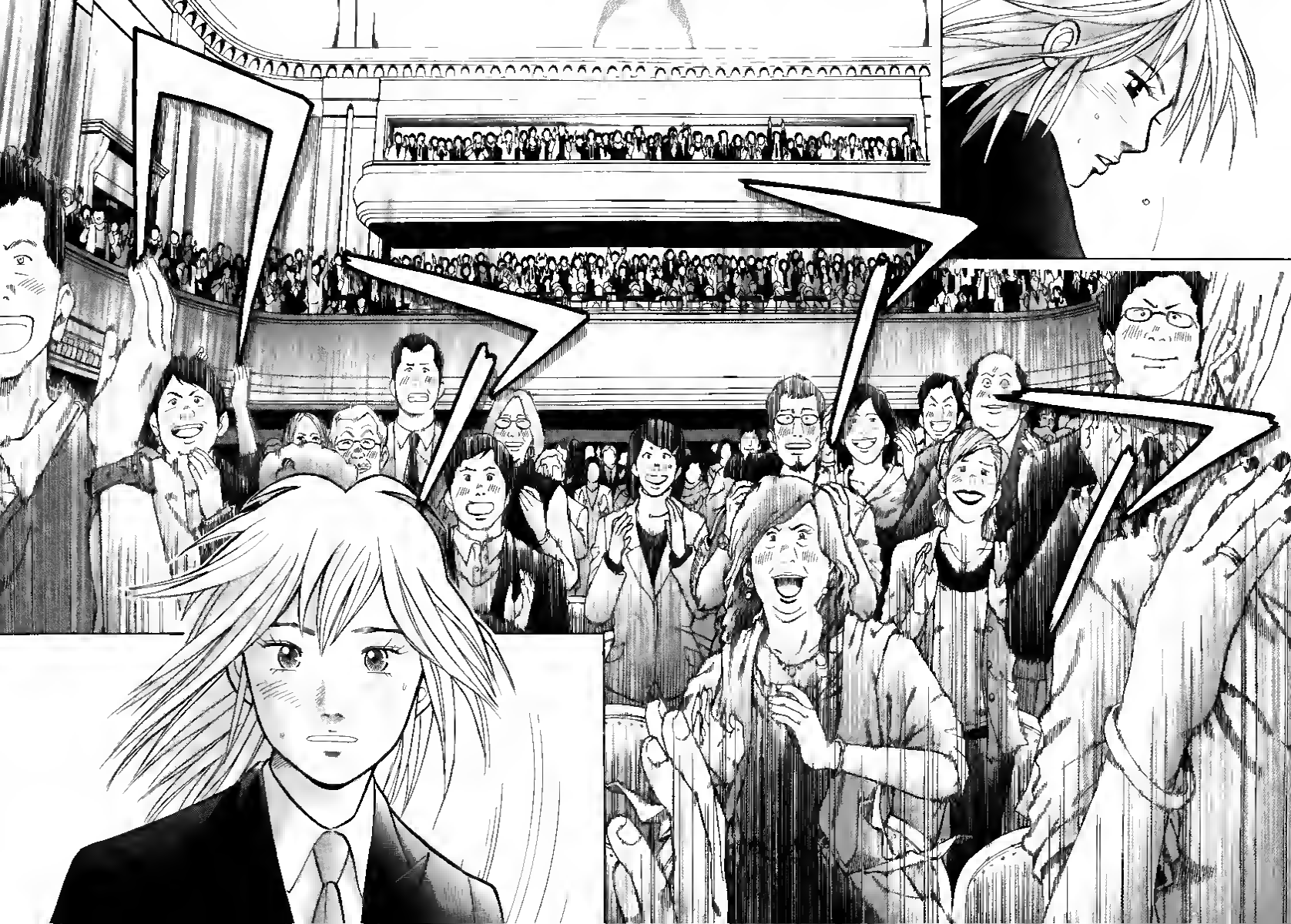
You're amazing, Ichinose!!
The final...
Keep up the tension until the very last note!!
Please keep it up!!
The final
fff

First strike...
Good job, Ichinose!!
!!?

Eh...??!!
A fist!!!

Second strike!


Third strike!



Andrzej?

T-This...
To say this is "Poland's Chopin"...

Proceed to the next stage
As if I'd acknowledge that!!
NO
CHINOSE
fff (Fortississimo) END

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PIANO NO MORI

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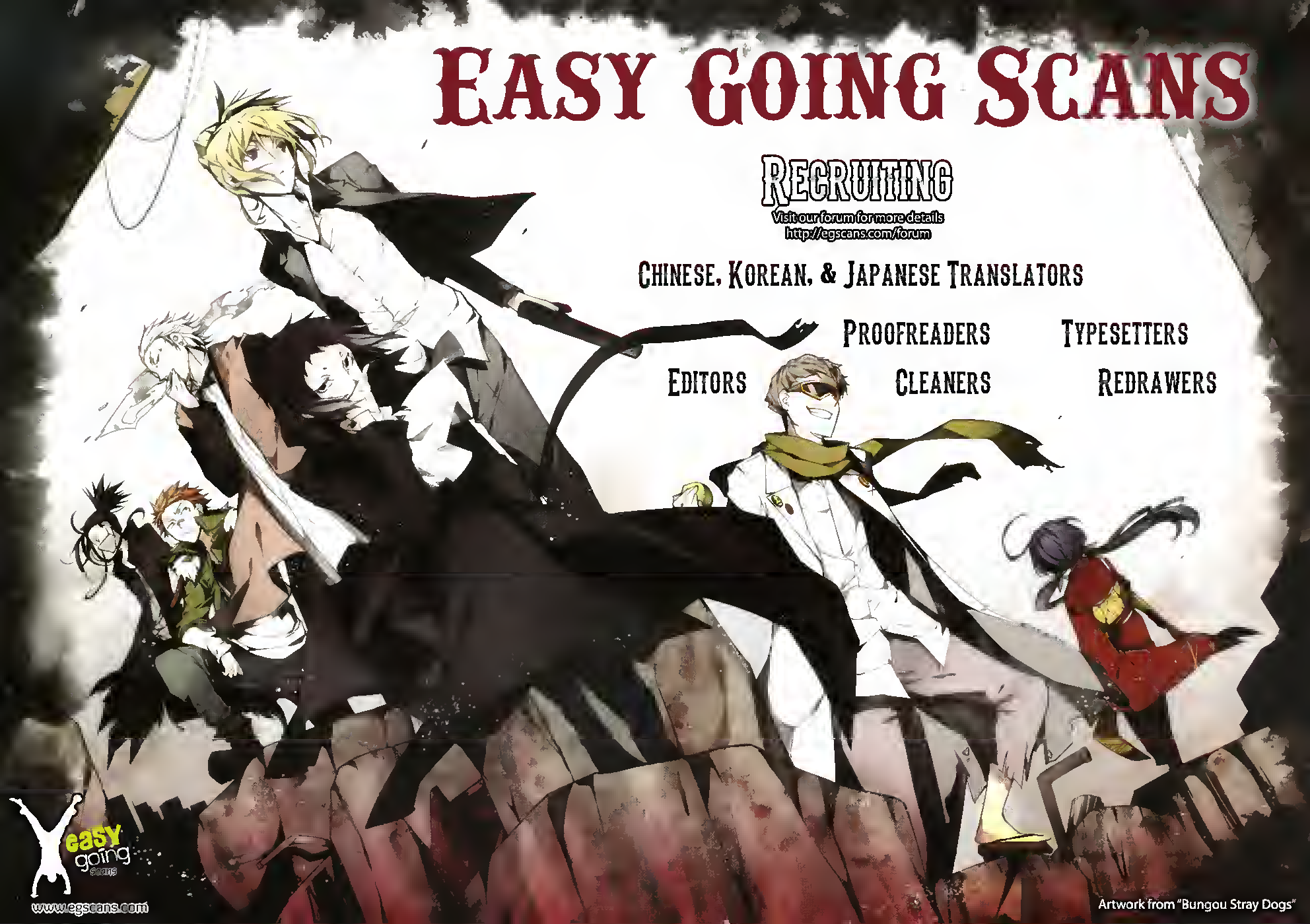
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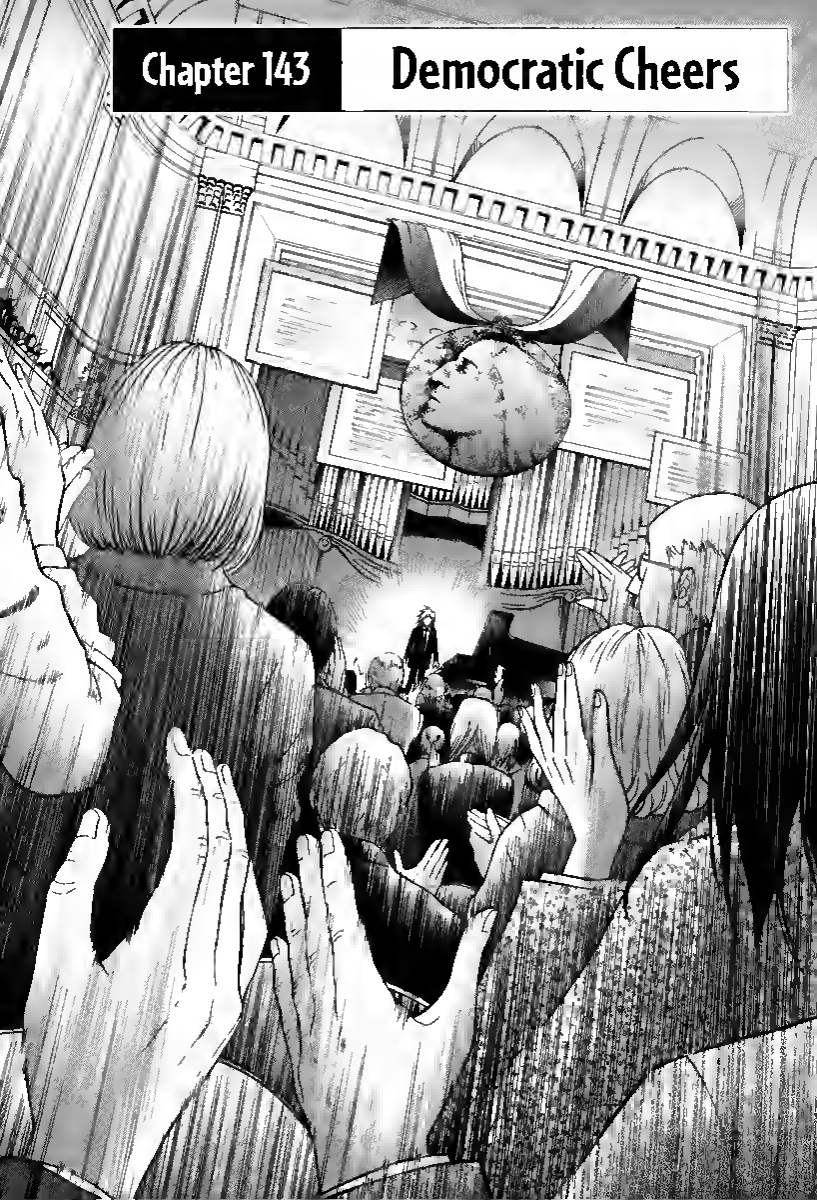
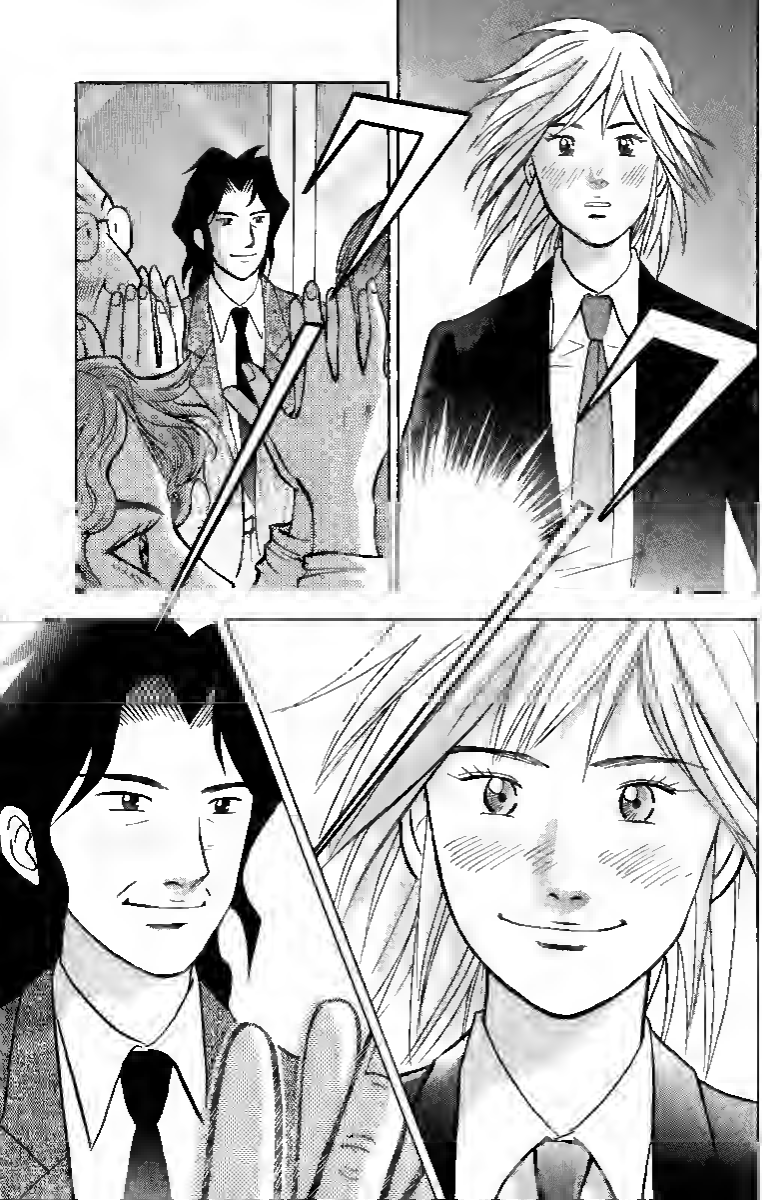
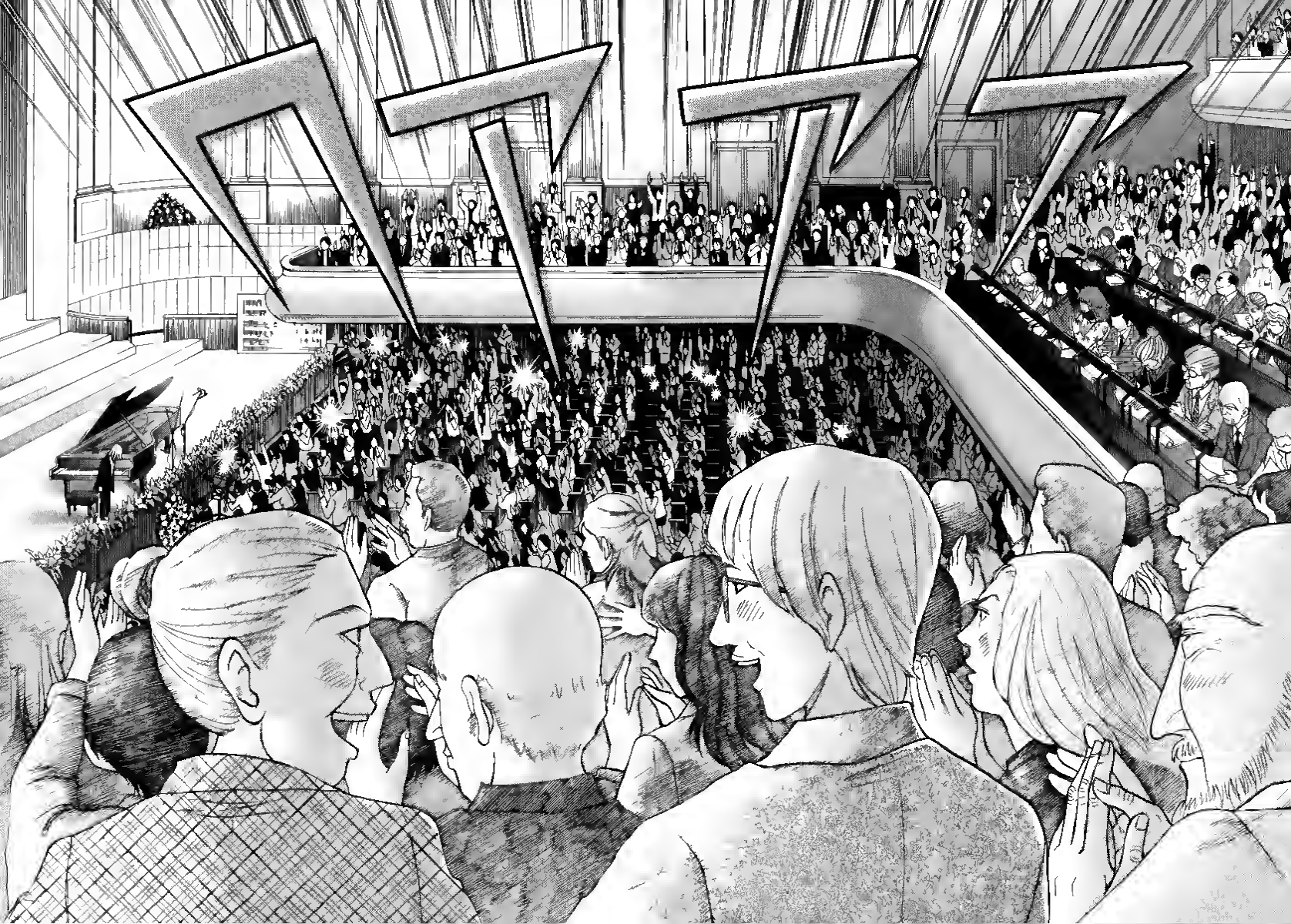
Chapter 143 Democratic Cheers





Amazing, Kai!!!
Amazing! Amazing!
うおおおお
ブラブラ

This is...
Ajino Sousuke's only student.
フラウト

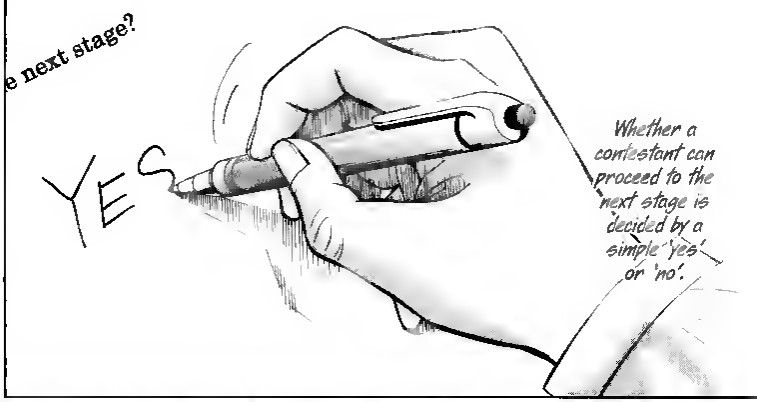

パチパチ

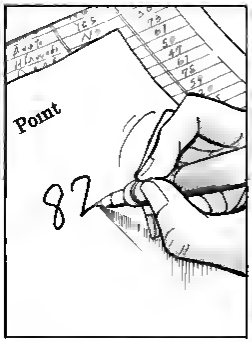
37

!!?
Huh?
A...

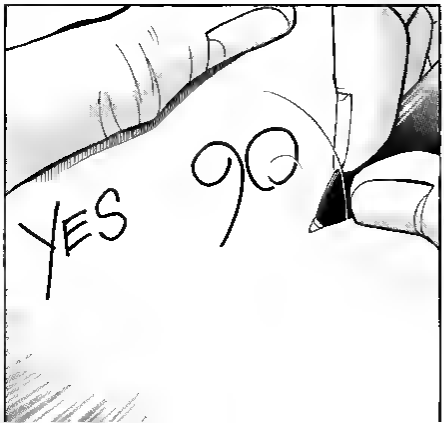
Ajino?!
Ajino Sousuke...??!!

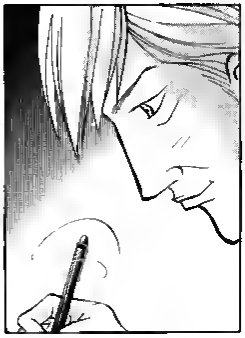
Number	Name	Proceed to the next stage?	Point
37	Kai ICHINOSE		

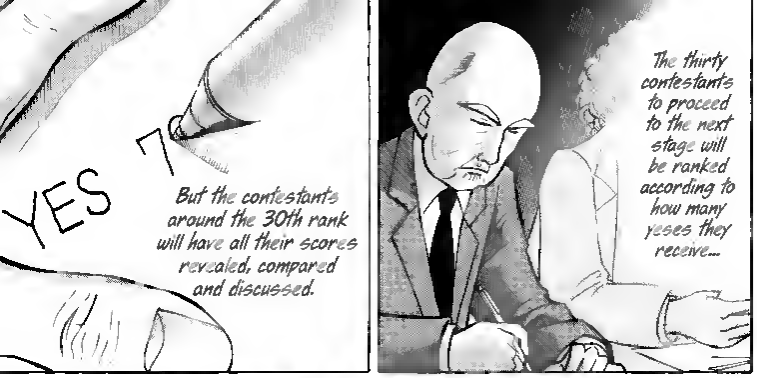

e next stage?
YES
Whether a contestant can proceed to the next stage is decided by a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

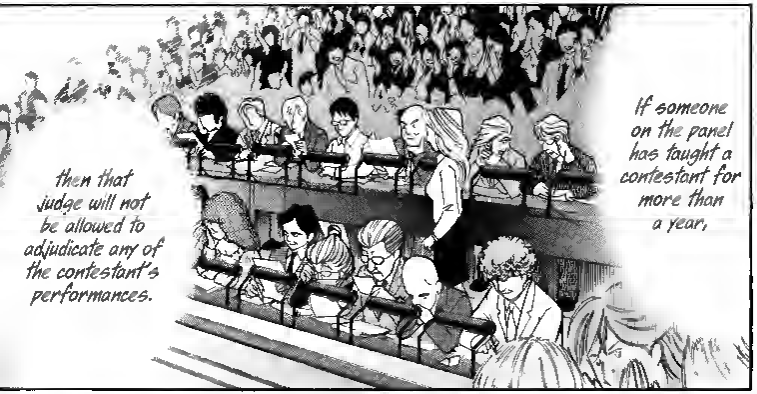

Point
82

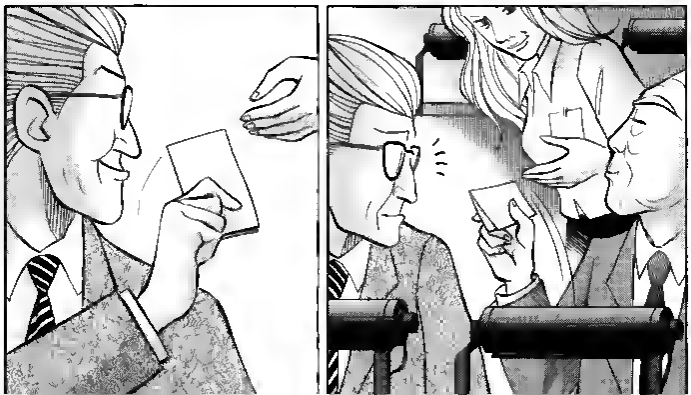
For the first round, the mark that would grant them a 'yes' is 70 and above
At the same time, they are also given points out of 100.

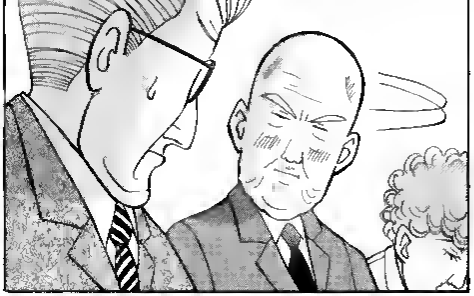

YES
90



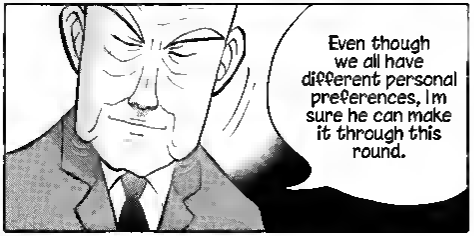

YES 7
But the contestants around the 30th rank will have all their scores revealed, compared and discussed.
The thirty contestants to proceed to the next stage will be ranked according to how many yeses they receive...


If someone on the panel has taught a contestant for more than a year,
then that judge will not be allowed to adjudicate any of the contestant's performances.





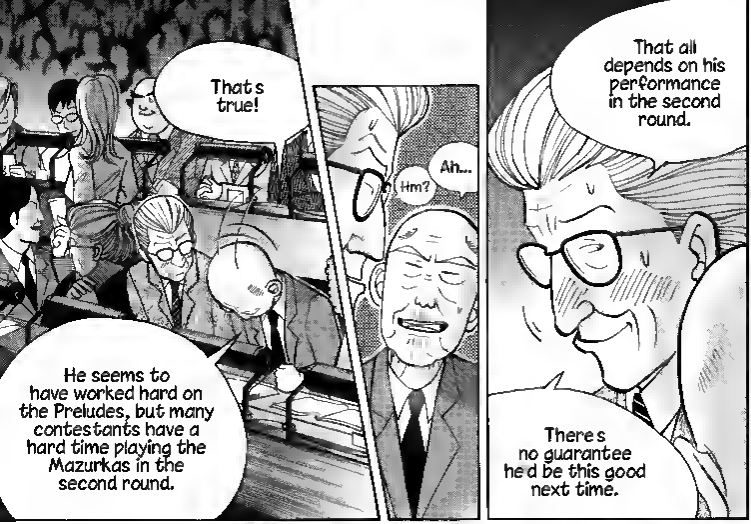
Kai Ichinose is so scary!


Even though we all have different personal preferences, I'm sure he can make it through this round.

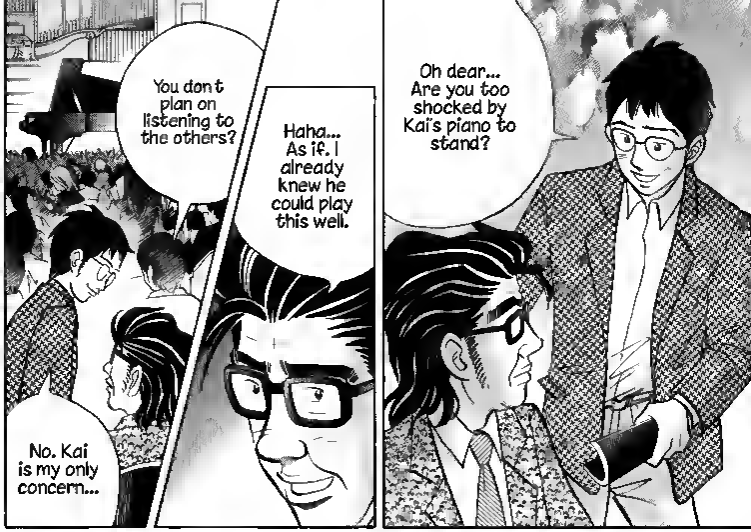
Also, his playing is just hypnotic. It makes you want more.
That is a wonderful talent for a pianist.
The unending applause is proof of that.

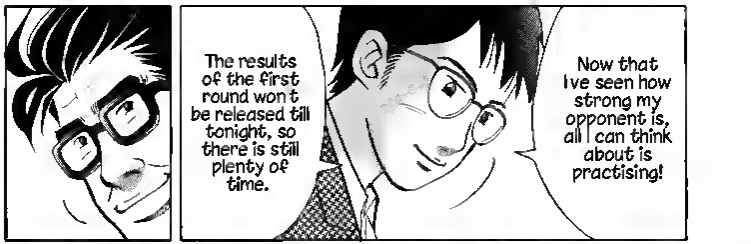
No.37, Kai Ichinose could very well be...
a black horse!

IPチ
IPチ
IPチ


That's true!
He seems to have worked hard on the Preludes, but many contestants have a hard time playing the Mazurkas in the second round.
Hm?
Ah...
That all depends on his performance in the second round.
There's no guarantee he'd be this good next time.

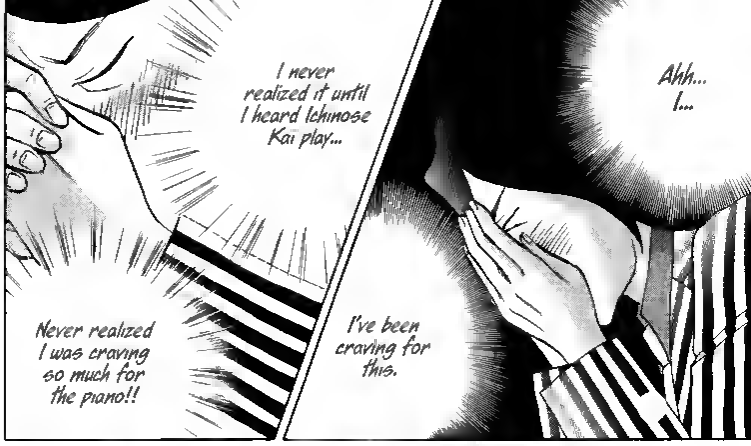
Hm?
Let's go, Dad.


You don't plan on listening to the others?
No. Kai is my only concern...
Haha... As if. I already knew he could play this well.
Oh dear... Are you too shocked by Kai's piano to stand?


The results of the first round won't be released till tonight, so there is still plenty of time.
Now that I've seen how strong my opponent is, all I can think about is practising!

Well, before that, let's go and have a nice lunch.
That's true.

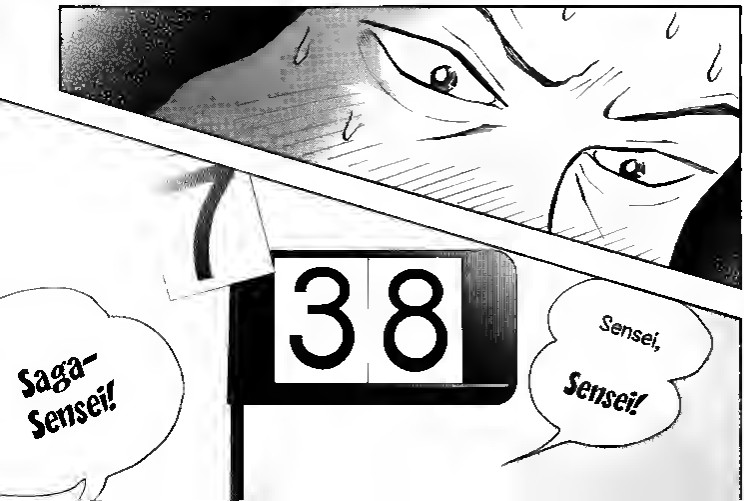
He was amazing! It's so exhilarating!
He's Japanese, so he went unnoticed at first!
We Poles finally got a decent contestant for the first time...
But he pales in comparison with the performance just now.
It's still too early to say! There's still the second round!
I've been fooled yet again.
He's no friend of mine.
Again...


I never realized it until I heard Ichinose Kai play...
Ahh... I...
Never realized I was craving so much for the piano!!
I've been craving for this.

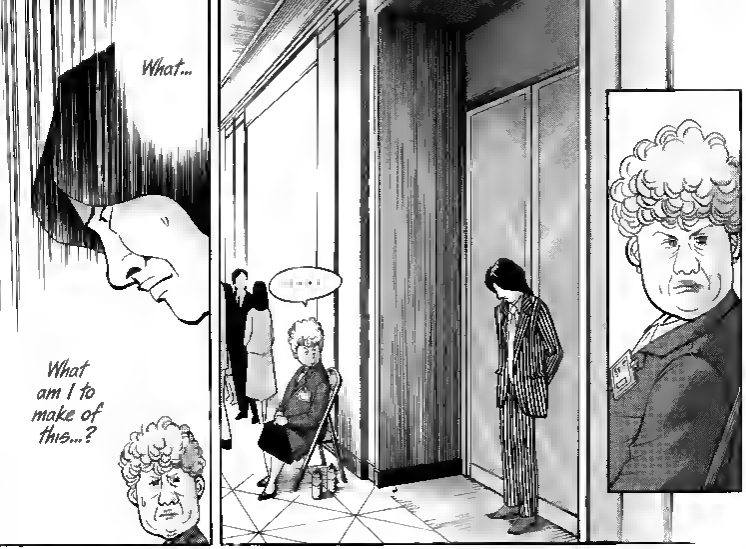
Ever since I was unable to hear Maria play...
No... This was the piano I was craving for.

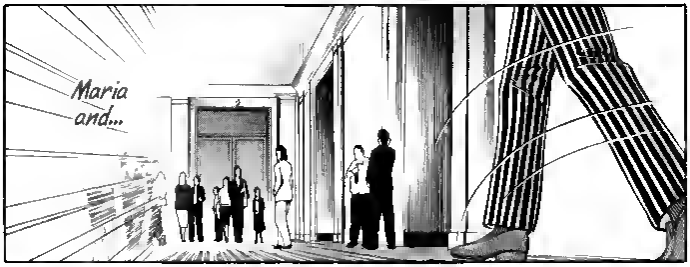
!?

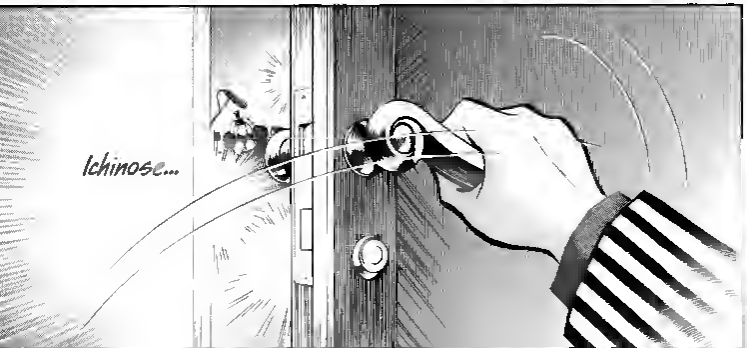
Maria and...
Ichinose...
What should I make of it?
Eh...?
What was that?!


38
Saga-Sensei!
Sensei, Sensei!

Eh?
Honestly... You shouldn't be so out of it, Sensei!
What are you spacing out for, Sensei?
The next contestant is coming out.
Hm hm
If you are here just as a member of the audience, I'll be in trouble.
I only got you a ticket for the competition because you said you would help me with my article!
Please don't forget that you're here to do a report!
Ah, where are you going Sensei?
I'm off reporting!
I've jotted down some notes on the programme. You can use them for the article.
Eh?


What...
What am I to make of this...?


Maria and...


Ichinose...

What on earth...?
Democratic Cheers—END

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PIANO NO MORI

by ISSHIKI Makoto
一色まこと

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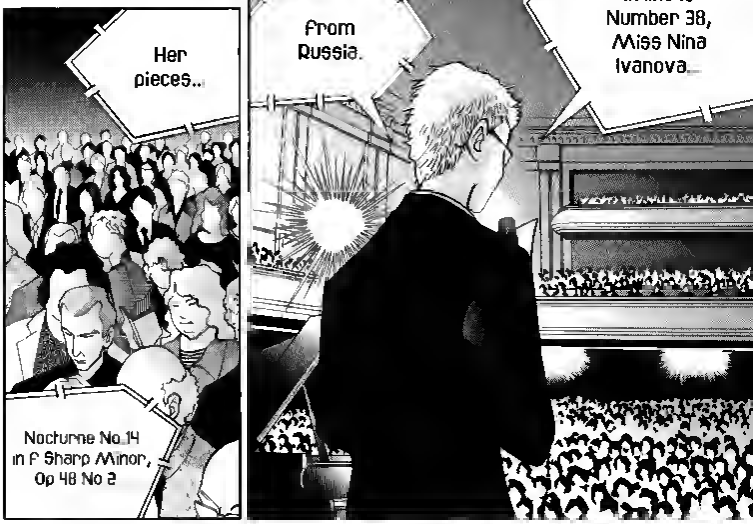
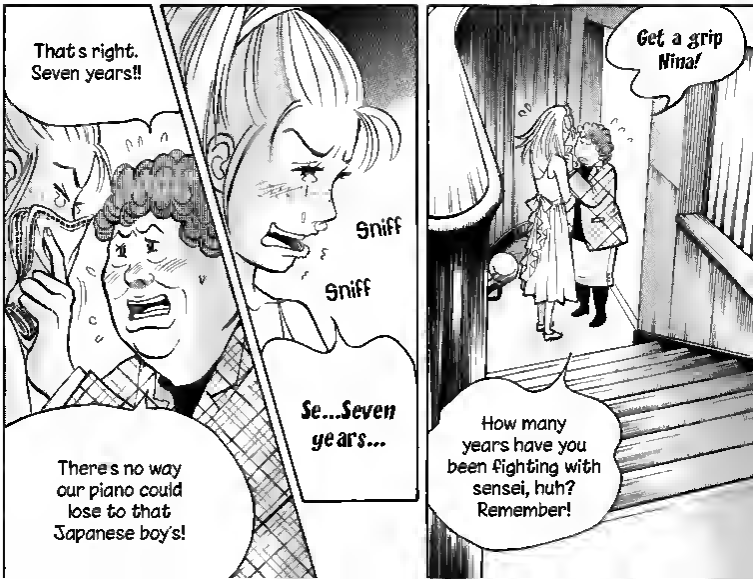
Chapter 144 The End of the First Round

Was it your idea to play the Op.10 No.1 and Op.10 No.2 Etudes with no pause as the opening piece?
Were your hands not tired at all?
Ah! I was wondering about that too!
Was it also your idea to hit the last fff with your fist?
Please, one question at a time!

Just who are you...
Ichinose,
I...
パチ
パチ
パチ
パチ
パチ


Her pieces...
Nocturne No.14 in F Sharp Minor, Op 48 No 2
From Russia.
Next one in line is Number 38, Miss Nina Ivanova...


That's right. Seven years!!
Sniff
Sniff
Se...Seven years...
There's no way our piano could lose to that Japanese boy's!
Get a grip Nina!
How many years have you been fighting with sensei, huh? Remember!

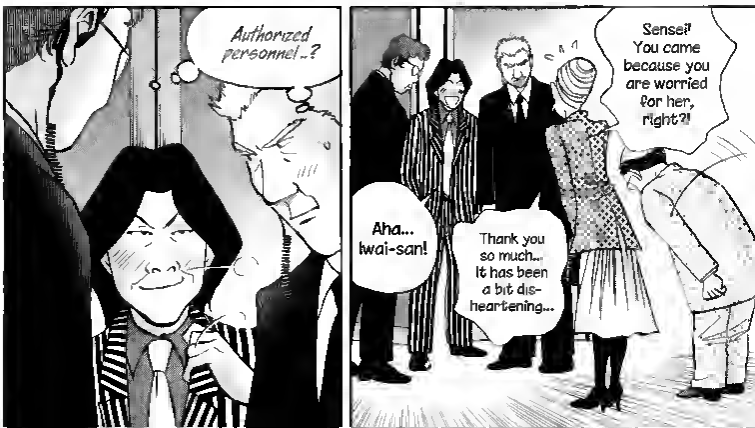
Number 38,
Nina Ivanova,
Smile, dear, smile!
Her piano of choice is Steinway
Russia!
It's alright!! So please, just focus on playing your piano!!

This is just horrible... having to play right after that kind of performance...
I was surprised by the Polish kid at the beginning too...
Seriously, I totally didn't expect this kind of thing to happen right on the final day!
His piano was completely under the radar until just now, huh!
Ichinose Kai ...

Yes! It's just the first round... Why would he start out so strong in the beginning?!
Is that so?
His standing ovation earlier lasted way over three minutes, you know?
I thought the only Japanese we needed to keep our eye on was Amamiya Shuuhei...
Just where did this kid come from?
That's right! His impact should have somewhat lessened after this.
Indeed. Still...
Anyway, our Mai-chan goes right after this girl right?! Thank God it's not now!
Well... It no use making a ruckus here, Mama...

Oh, if it isn't Saga-sensei!
Sorry Sir, but only authorized personnel are allowed in here!
I told you, I am authorized!

I am Iwai Mai's mother.
It's Iwai!


Authorized personnel..?
Sensei! You came because you are worried for her, right?!
Aha... Iwai-san!
Thank you so much... It has been a bit disheartening...

If he is that good, we should have at least heard of him.
Isn't this going against the rules?
Sensei, did you know about him?

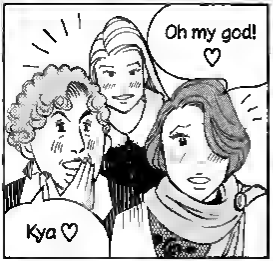
Sensei, just what on earth is going on?
We have never even heard of Ichinose Kai before!

Ever since he was in elementary school...
I've known him...
Yeah, I did.
Well, the rules of the Chopin Competition have been changed...
Indeed, in the past, results obtained in other competitions were also an important factor of being qualified,
so only children who have made a name of their own could participate...
But this time, there was a preliminary round, so those qualifications are no longer necessary.
Ah... I really didn't know anything about Ichinose. I ended up badmouthing him... even though he is an acquaintance of yours, sensei...
Eh?

A...
Ajino?!
Ajino?!

Is he the real deal...

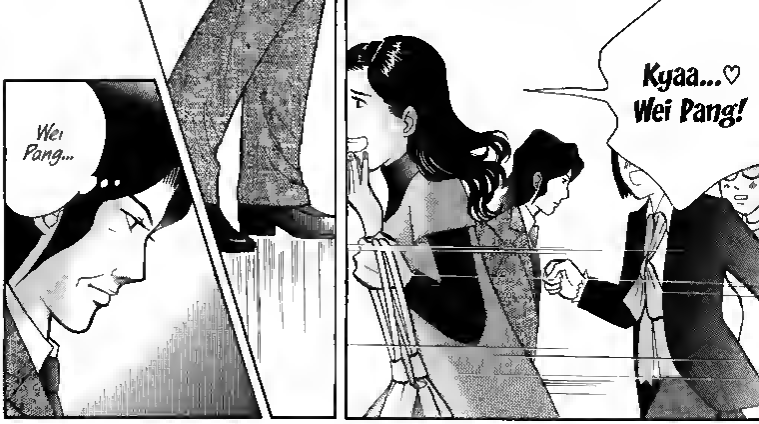
Oh! It's Wei Fang.
Ajino Sousuke?!

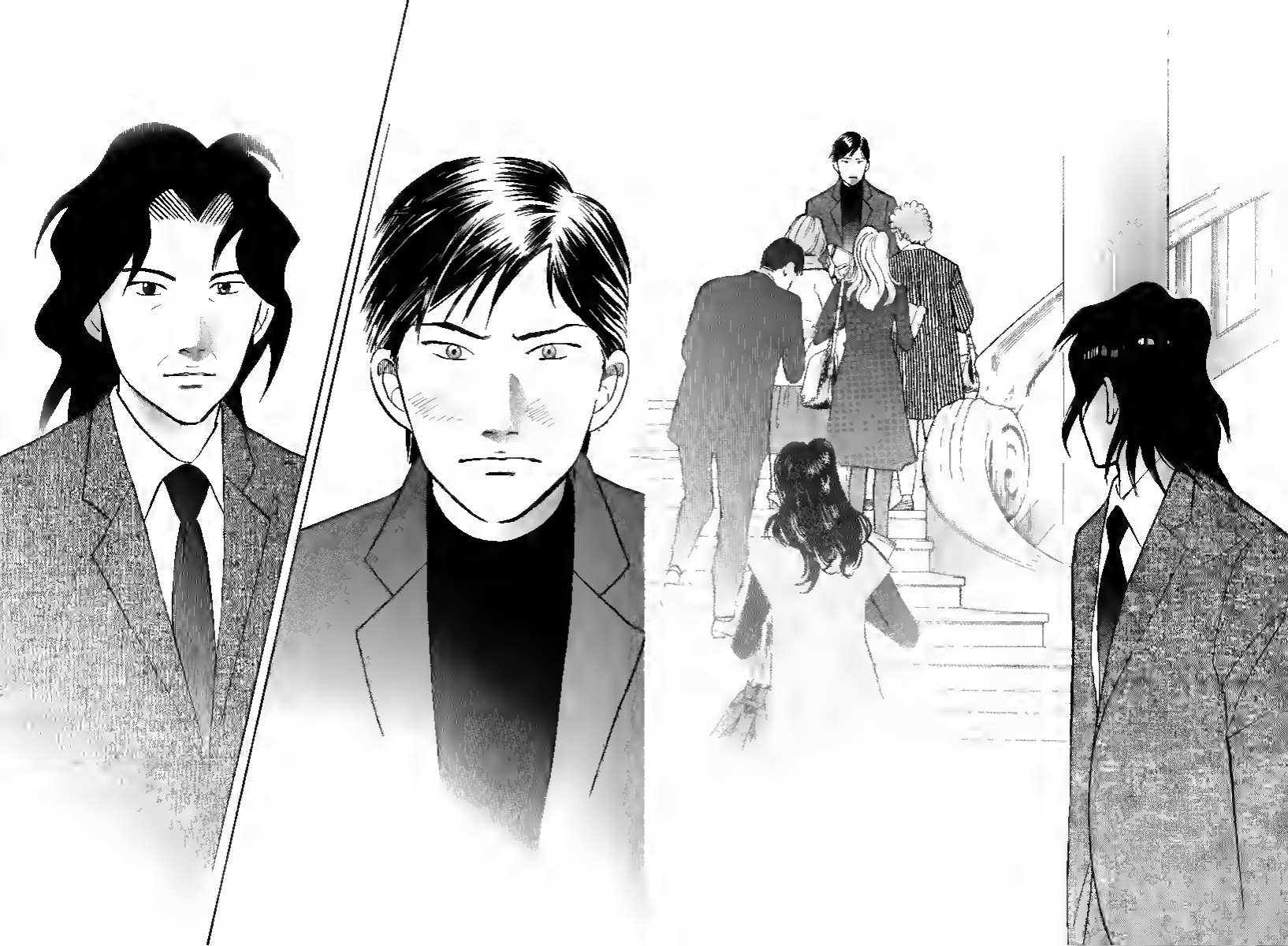

Oh my god! ♡
Kya ♡

I need to make sure!

Darn... Darn it!
If I get surrounded, I won't be able to move...

We are rooting for you Kyaa! ♡
ドド…
Ah...
I have always been your fan!!
May I have your autograph, please?!
I want one as well...
And a handshake, too!!
Ah... Those people are asking Wei Pang for an autograph!
Man! I want one, too!!

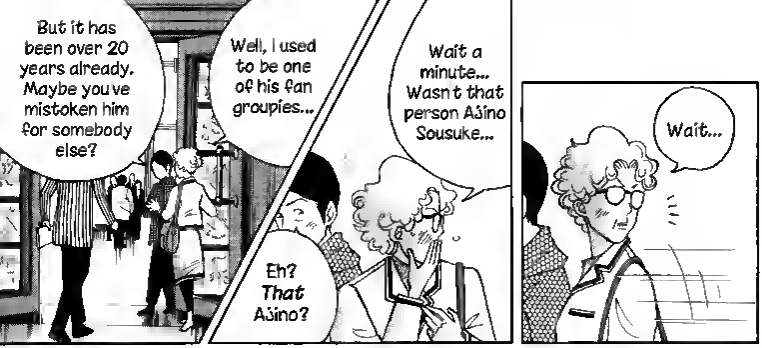

Wei Pang...
Kyaa...♡
Wei Pang!



A...
What?
Who's that?
There's no mistaking it.

It is the real Ajino Sousuke!!!

Finally...
Finally, we meet.


But it has been over 20 years already. Maybe you've mistoken him for somebody else?
Well, I used to be one of his fan groupies...
Wait a minute... Wasn't that person Aôino Sousuke...
Eh? That Aôino?
Wait...

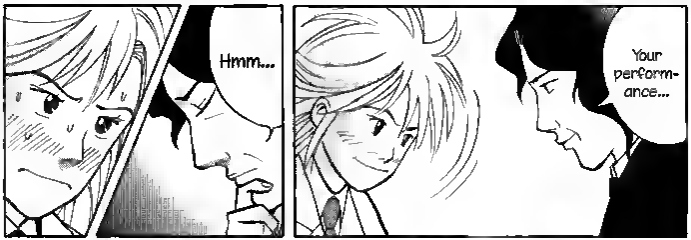
So that's Wei Pang.

I was so surprised by how his playing was the spitting image of yours, Sousuke.
The champion of the last Long-Thibaud Competition was a Chinese youth called Wei Pang.

Sousuke, do you know anything about this Wei Pang?
I'm afraid not.
Oh, really?
You really should listen to him play. Even his habits are similar to yours.
You're in for a huge shock!
Haha... Then if I ever have the chance, I will have a go with this huge shock.

My already lost piano playing...
being perfectly replicated by someone else...
Is that really something I'd want to listen to, I wonder...
Sensei!

Kai!
How was it?!
How was my performance today?!


Hmm...
Your performance...

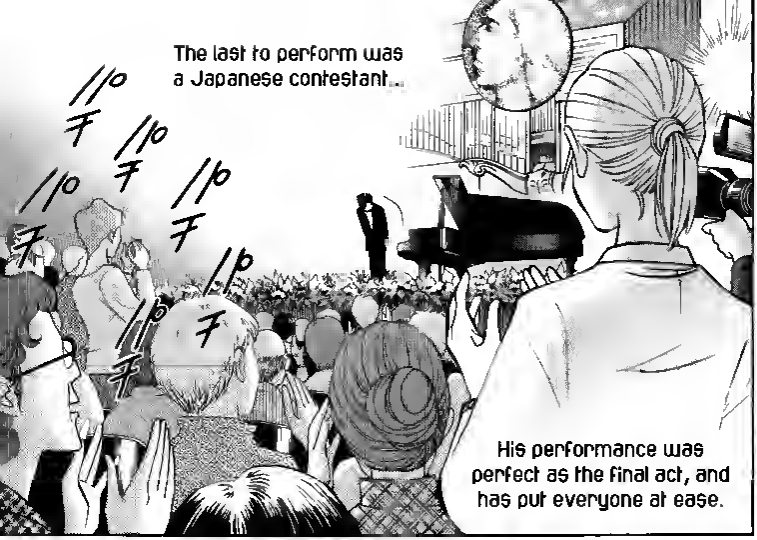
Awesome is what it was!!
Don't be such a tease!!

Ahaha... You are spoiling him too much.
Really?
It was wonderful! The very best performance I've ever heard in the world!!
Kai!!
Grandpa Jean!!
Actually, I've already made a reservation!
Really? ♡
But anyway, why don't we go and eat something delicious, eh?!
Now all we have to do is to wait for the results to be released tonight.
But I couldn't really make out everything when they spoke in rapid English...
If that's the case, just tell them, "Come back again when you've brushed up your Japanese"!
Ahaha...
But it's going to be even more crowded next time, so running away won't be so easy anymore...
Were you able to run away from the interviews?
I didn't run away. I took them all!

I can't ask him.
I...
My thoughts are in complete disarray. What should I ask him... How should I ask him...
Even if I manage to catch up with Ichinose...
and Maria's piano, which I have been yearning for...
definitely share the same DNA.
Ichinose's piano...

I... I can't keep myself composed anymore...
But what if his reponse is just a nonchalant "So what?"...

Final day of the first round
Bravo!

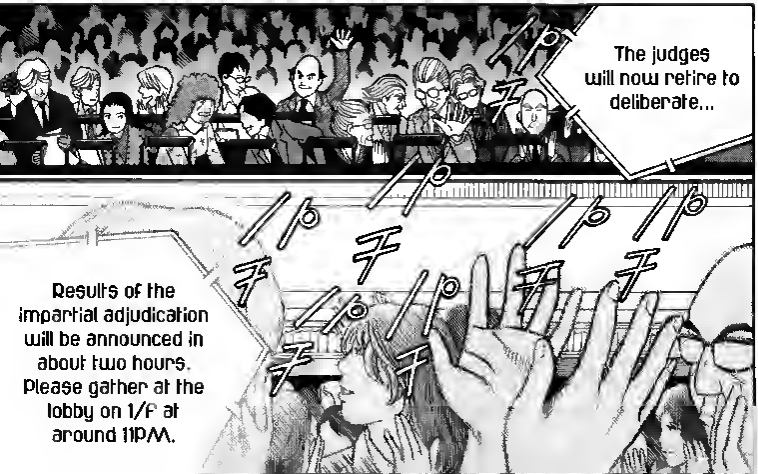

The last to perform was a Japanese contestant...
His performance was perfect as the final act, and has put everyone at ease.

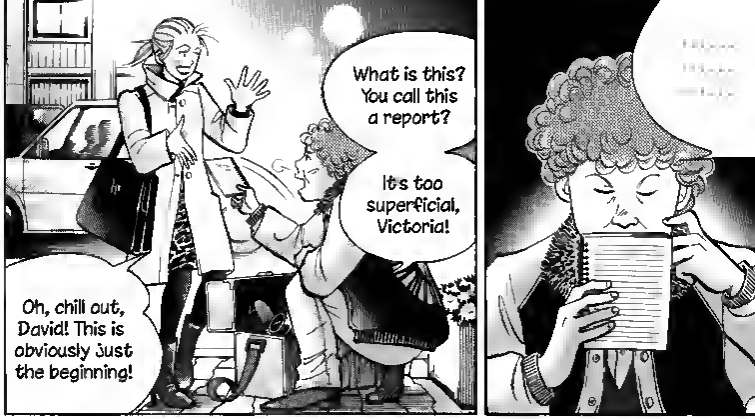
and the equally nameless Japanese, Kai Ichinose...
are still Lech Symanowski, the unsung Polish who performed first in the morning session

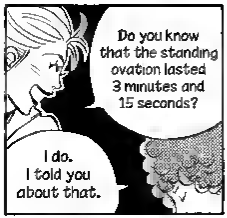
However, the ones who have become talk of the town on the final day...

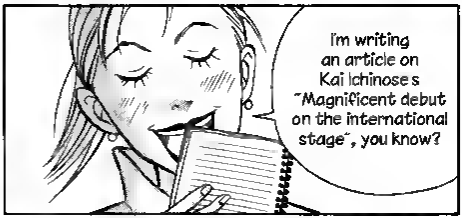
Especially when Kai Ichinose's standing ovation, which lasted 3 minutes and 15 seconds ..
was the longest out of the 80 contestants in the first round.
With that, the first round of performances has now come to an end.

Dear audience, judges, and contestants...
パチパチパチパチパチパチ
Thank you very much for all your hard work in these nine long days!


The judges will now retire to deliberate...
パチパチパチパチパチパチ
Results of the impartial adjudication will be announced in about two hours. Please gather at the lobby on 1/F at around 11PM.

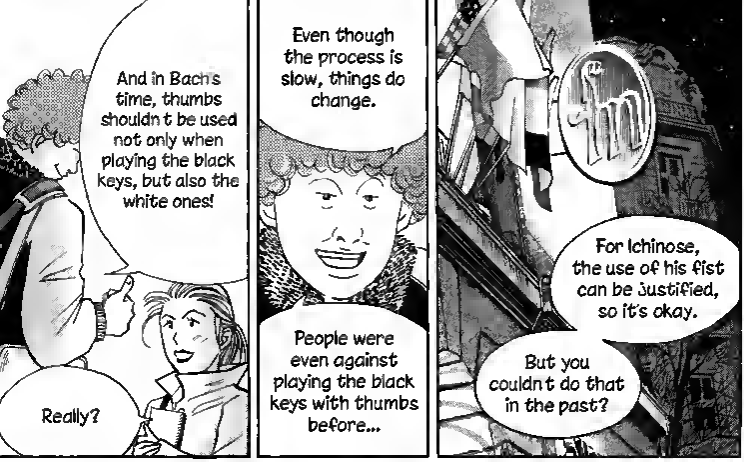

What is this? You call this a report?
It's too superficial, Victoria!
Oh, chill out, David! This is obviously just the beginning!


Do you know that the standing ovation lasted 3 minutes and 15 seconds?
I do. I told you about that.


I'm writing an article on Kai Ichinose's "Magnificent debut on the international stage", you know?

Precedent cases aside...
As long as it really has a point and isn't just a gimmick, even playing with your elbow is acceptable, so his fist strike shouldn't be a problem.

Ahh... And that fist at the end...
Is that really allowed in the competition?
Yes.


And in Bach's time, thumbs shouldn't be used not only when playing the black keys, but also the white ones!
Really?
Even though the process is slow, things do change.
People were even against playing the black keys with thumbs before...
For Ichinose, the use of his fist can be justified, so it's okay.
But you couldn't do that in the past?

Sh...
It... It's probably almost time.

Shoot! We haven't saved a good spot yet!

The End of the First Round, END

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PIANO NO MORI

by ISSHIKI Makoto
一色まこと

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Piano no Mori ch 144

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Artwork from "Piano no Mori"

What's with the crowd?
What's happening at the philharmonic hall?
Ah, it's the Chopin Competition held once every five years.
Come to think of it, the news did mention the results for the first round would be out tonight!
At this hour?
What time is it now?

Chapter 145
The results still aren't ready?
It's almost 11 o'clock!

People...
People...
People...
Talking in all sorts of different languages...
Laughing...
Discussing...
ざわ
ざわ
ざわ
ざわ

But...
To me, they're all just stacking together, like the rumblings of a sandstorm.
In that sandstorm...

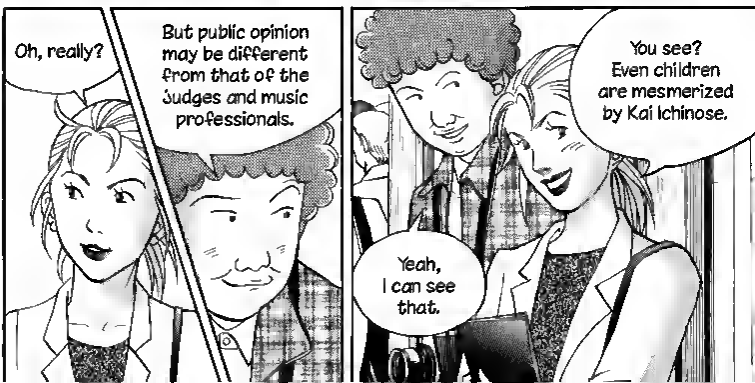
No!
It's like this!

That's impossible.
How is that impossible? I saw it with my own eyes!
This!
Like...
Ehhhhhhh?
In that sandstorm...
What? Who are you talking about?!
But his playing can also be bold and resolute...
He looks so pretty... I thought he could only play delicate music...
Don't go judging him by which country he is from.
You have to listen to it!
It was a very cool performance.
He is Japanese?

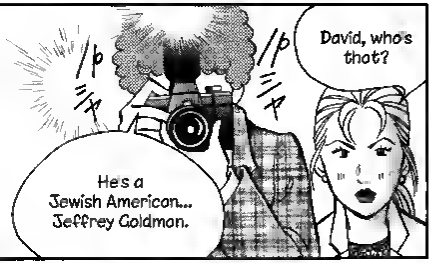
This should be a matter of fact...
He is, after all, the greatest enemy I have ever faced.
stunned by Kai's performance.
I guess the judges weren't the only ones...
reach my ears.
Only the comments about Kai...

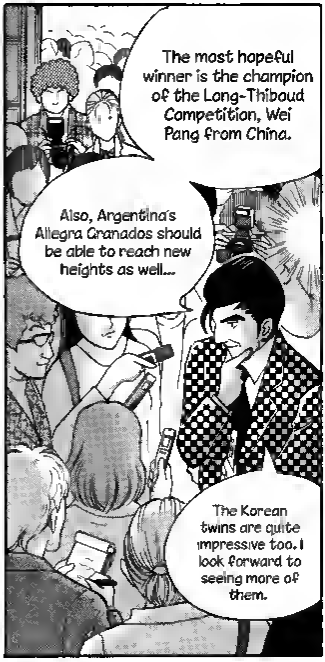
Haha...
Number 1 will be Japan's Ichinose Kai!!
It's definitely Kai!

I know, so don't shout!
Kai is number 1!!
Number 1! Number 1!

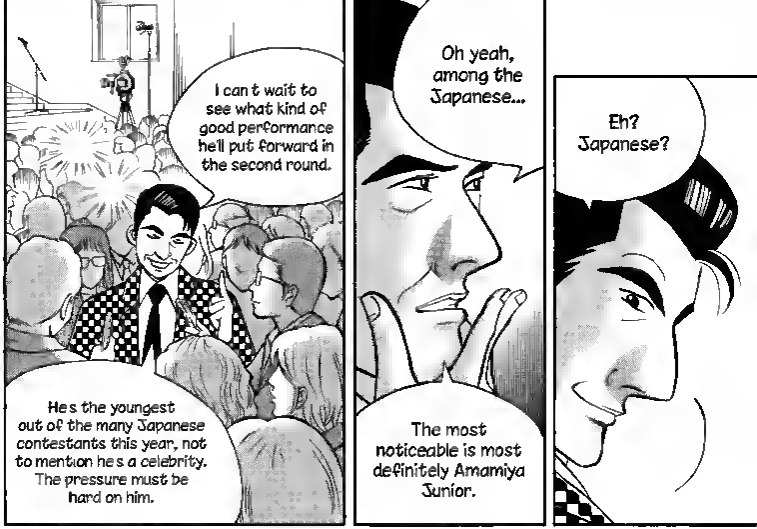

Oh, really?
But public opinion may be different from that of the Judges and music professionals.
Yeah, I can see that.
You see? Even children are mesmerized by Kai Ichinose.

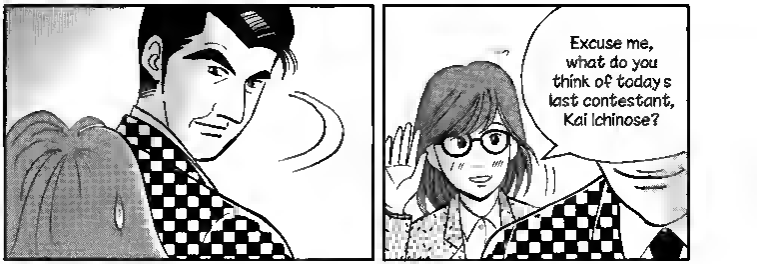
Yes, that's right.


David, who's that?
He's a Jewish American... Jeffrey Goldman.


The most hopeful winner is the champion of the Long-Thibaud Competition, Wei Pang from China.
Also, Argentina's Allegra Granados should be able to reach new heights as well...
The Korean twins are quite impressive too. I look forward to seeing more of them.

Not only is he quite an entrepreneur, he's also a famous musician.
And his chivalrous and friendly manner makes him very popular.


I can't wait to see what kind of good performance he'll put forward in the second round.
He's the youngest out of the many Japanese contestants this year, not to mention he's a celebrity. The pressure must be hard on him.
Oh yeah, among the Japanese...
The most noticeable is most definitely Amamiya Junior.
Eh? Japanese?


Excuse me, what do you think of today's last contestant, Kai Ichinose?

Ichinose?
No. 37, Kai Ichinose?

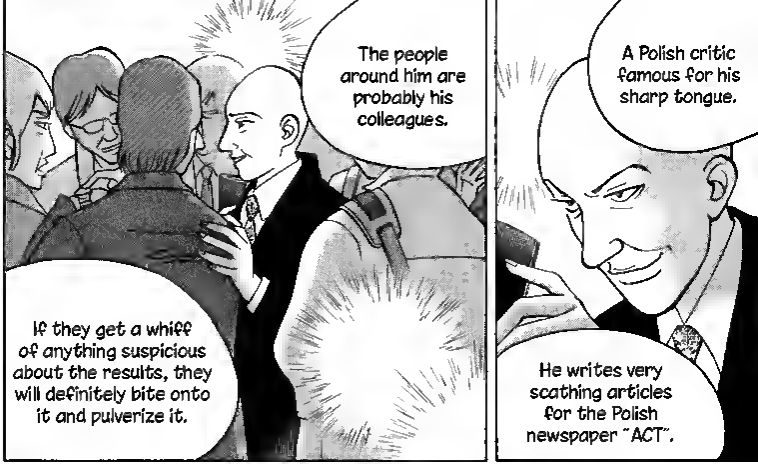
He was amazing!! So free and brilliant!!!
Even if he doesn't get into the second round, I still want to take him under my wing!!
Ye...
Yes.
Even the professionals are agreeing.
See?
He's a reknowned entrepreneur and musician...
and he's also famous for being a homosexual.
Ah... So that was what he meant.
Of course, it's quite common for public and expert opinion to coincide!
But his statement was a bit curious.

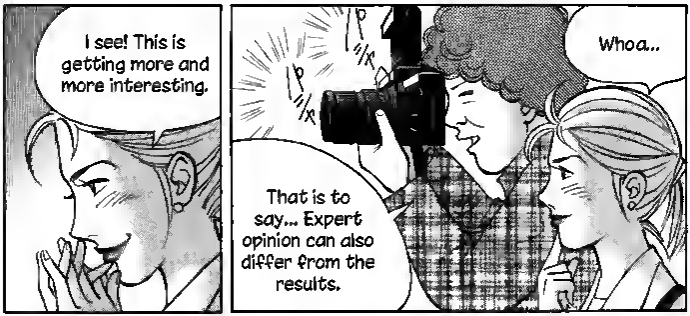
Ah...
Someone's coming down!
Eh?
David, they're announcing the results!

ゴクッ
Um... I am here to inform you of the deliberation situation
Due to the cancellation of the first list of contestants admitted into the next round,
A second list is currently being compiled, so...

Our deepest apologies, but please wait a little longer
Ehhhh? How long is a little???!
This happens quite often, Just be prepared to stay here till midnight.
What's with all the fuss?
Eh~~~~~~~

The judges should have finished giving the score at the end of each performance.
If the ranking really is based on the scores, as they claim to be the case,
all they have to do is to select the top 30 contestants.
If it's choosing 30 contestants from the first round...
It would only take me less than 5 minutes.
He is...?
That's Jacek Hoffman.
There should be no need to deliberate for 2 or 3 hours, right?
Unless there is some foul play involved here.


The people around him are probably his colleagues.
If they get a whiff of anything suspicious about the results, they will definitely bite onto it and pulverize it.
A Polish critic famous for his sharp tongue.
He writes very scathing articles for the Polish newspaper "ACT".


I see! This is getting more and more interesting.
Whoa...
That is to say... Expert opinion can also differ from the results.

I think there're some sparks flying over there.
Where?
In the middle of the crowd in black.

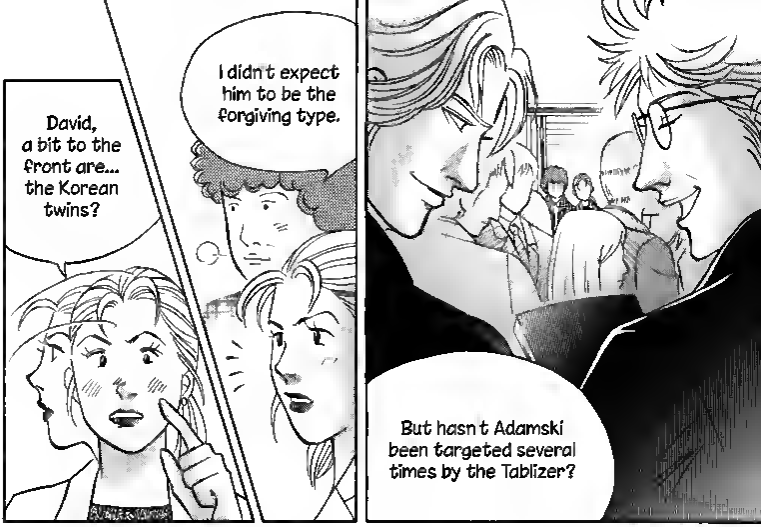
Those are reporters of "Tablizer", which often publishes deliciously scathing articles.
They may only be a small tabloid in Poland, but they're hugely popular and not to be underestimated.

The young reporter right in the middle is Simon Hausner. He appears in the media a lot so he's also a bit of a celebrity.

It really is Adamski!

Ah!

David, is he talking to Karol Adamski?!
Poland's superstar!


David, a bit to the front are... the Korean twins?
I didn't expect him to be the forgiving type.
But hasn't Adamski been targeted several times by the Tablizer?

You're right! It's the An brothers!
Oh my god! Sophie Ormesson is right in front of them!!

Too bad. I don't think Wei Pang will be here.
His aversion to crowded places is pretty famous. And he should be confident enough to know that he'll definitely make it into the next round.
Then, Kai Ichinose and Wei Pang will also be here?
I want to interview them...
Of course the contestants are here. This decides whether they get into the next round, after all!
Especially when there are 80 contestants in the first round, most of them, though probably not all of them, will be here tonight.
As for Ichinose...
We might find him somewhere if we look around.

Aaaaa!!!
This is bad!
I'm late!

What was I doing ??!!!

I've found the Japanese big name!
Who?

Ah!
Finding Ichinose would be good... But Victoria!

The Amamiya father-son duo!
I don't have a picture of them together yet!

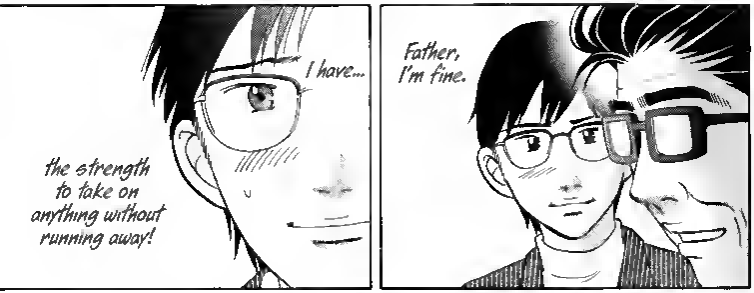
I've only come to keep my son company.
This is a bit bewildering.
That's a promise! Please make time for an interview with us after the results are out!
Really? You really mean it, sensei?
Ahaha
But he often gives the most appropriate answers for me during interviews.
That's what father says...
Hehe
Staying by my side, and helping me out of tight spots.
Especially this time... He is constantly protecting me from the media and fans...

The boisterous atmosphere orchestrated by such groups has nothing to do with the performer's actual ability.
Ostentatious standing ovations are made by the performer's own group of supporters most of the time...
Shuhei will definitely make it through the first round! The reaction to his performance is very positive!
That's right!
Ah, but the audience's applause is not that reliable.
So... Should we also start a cheering group for Shuhei?
?
It will not affect the judges' impartial deliberation at all!
Eh? Really?
Haha... I don't think they understand what you mean.
Oh...
Ah, that was just generally speaking.

But, Father...
said all that for me to hear.
Father...
He doesn't have a fan club or anything like that.
If you were talking about Kai...
That was...
Kai's power.

"Don't pay attention to that standing ovation!"
I understand your hidden message, Father.

and uneasy.
Father's thoughtfulness is making me feel suffocated...

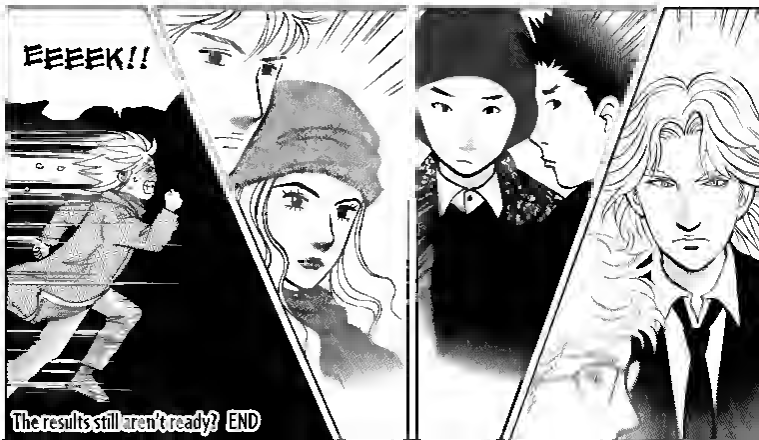

I have...
the strength to take on anything without running away!
Father, I'm fine.

FATHER!
But genuine skills are...
Fa...
Well, popularity is just a temporary thing.

What is it?
Ah...
Yes?
CLICK
Fa... Father...
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK

Ah!
Didn't you already take them?
Who is this man? It's rude to take pictures like that... You'd scare them!
Ah!
I'm sorry, can I take some pictures?
The...
The judges are coming down!!

ソ〃ロ
ソ〃ロ
They're really going to announce them now!


EEEEK!!
The results still aren't ready? END

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PIANO NO MORI

by ISSHIKI Makoto
一色まこと

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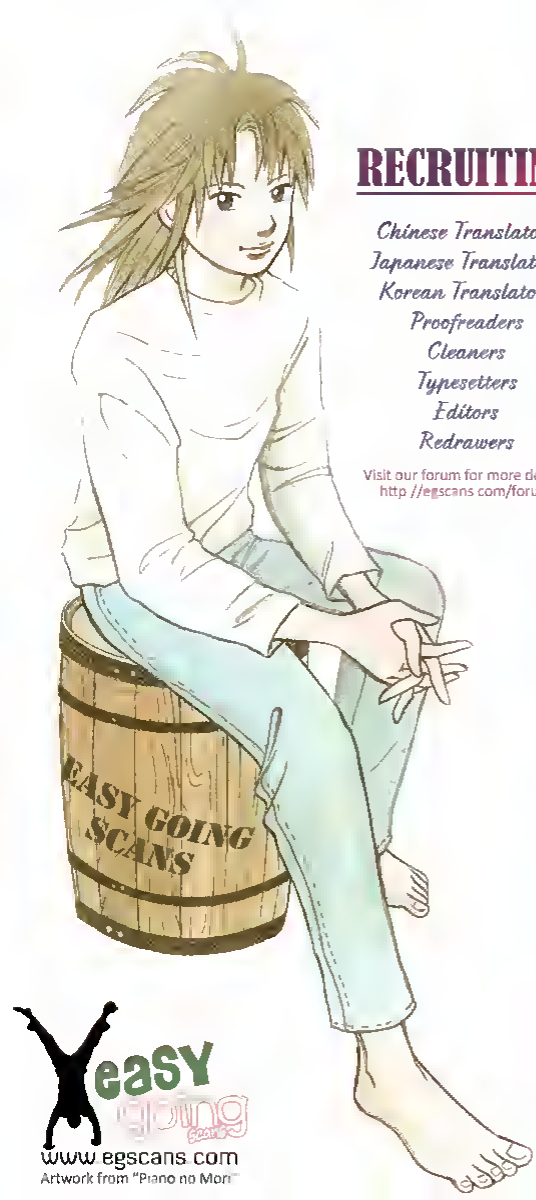

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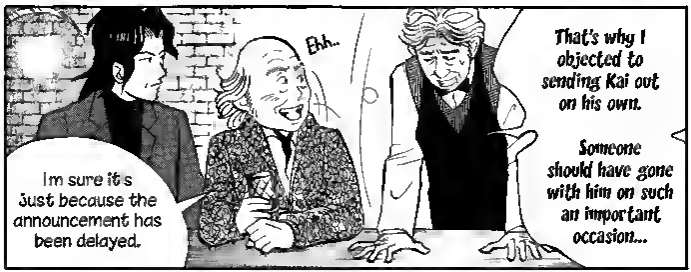
Artwork from "Piano no Mori"

Now we shall announce the results of...
the First Round of the 15th Chopin Competition.
Eh... Sorry to have kept you waiting.
SONY

パシャ
パシャ
パシャ
パシャ
パシャ
パシャ
パシャ
パシャ
Finally.

I... I don't think that would be the case...
Maybe he didn't make it...
Kai still haven't contacted us yet...
He should've called us back with the result by now...
VASTROD
What's going on?

...
Hahaha... No! No! That can't be it!
Considering Kai's character and all...
Maybe he got rejected and was too devasatated to call?


Ehh..
I'm sure it's just because the announcement has been delayed.
That's why I objected to sending Kai out on his own.
Someone should have gone with him on such an important occasion...

You worry too much...
It would be better to keep him busy so he wouldn't be too anxious about the announcement... Didn't you agree as well?
Argh... I'm an idiot! I shouldn't have made him work till the last minute...
And he was already exhausted from the performance this morning...

That's right! If something happens, Kai will definitely contact us.
He knows that we're waiting for him!
Jan says he thinks something has happened since Kai still hasn't called.
Don't worry! Kai will call me on his cellphone if anything goes wrong!
Aaargh... This is bad! I'm gonna be late!!
Dammit... I really should've come straight from the shop!!

I was just getting a change of clothes back at the apartment!!
I sat on the sofa for just a while...
It was just a little while ...
But I ended up sleeping for a whole hour!!!
ひぇ

ばひゅ
ばらゃ

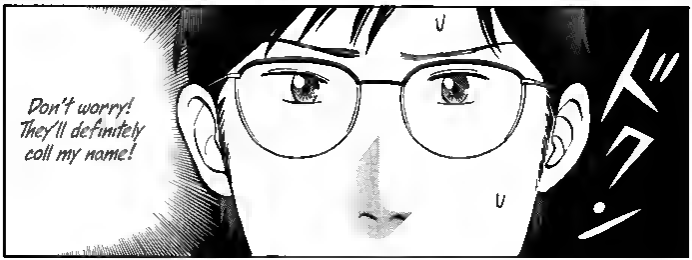
ばひゅ
ばひゅ
And now, we shall announce the results of...

ばひゅ
the First Round of the 15th Chopin Competition!
Th...They've only just started?
ばひゅ

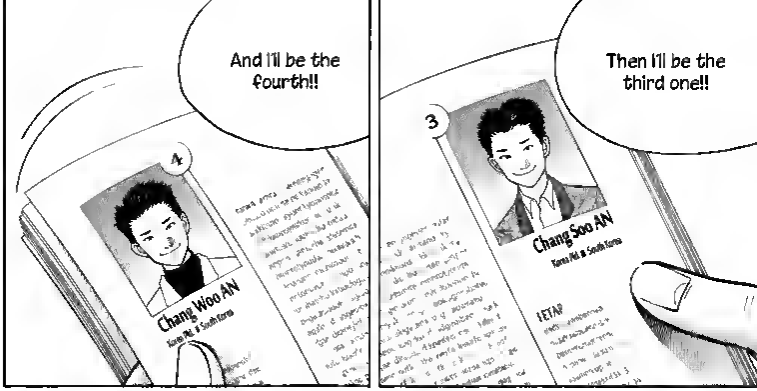
We will now announce the names of the semi-finalists according to alphabetical order!
Alphabetical order, he said..
Alphabetical order..
Not by order of appearance..
Alpha-betical order?
The names will only be read out once, then the list will be posted on the notice board at the hall entrance for all to verify
The interviews will commence after the announcement

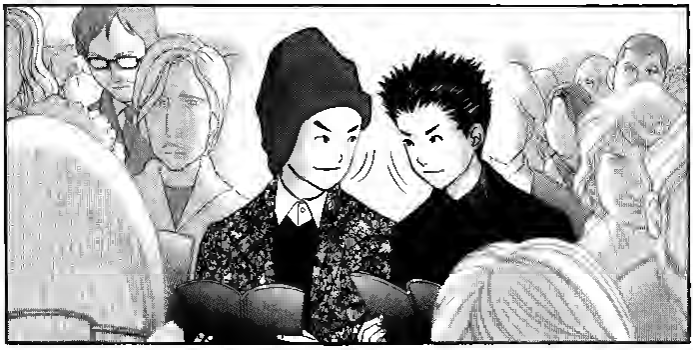
"Number One" is a lucky charm!
Guess the headline is decided then! Looks like it's gonna be a good article!
For better or worse... At least I'll come first!
If it's by alphabetical order, Karol...
"Adamski" will be the first name to be read out, so we don't have to worry about not catching it!
If you want to atone for what you've done to me, you'd better get it right, okay?
A good article?
OK!!
Haha! Make sure you get a nice close-up of that moment, boys!
That's too close...

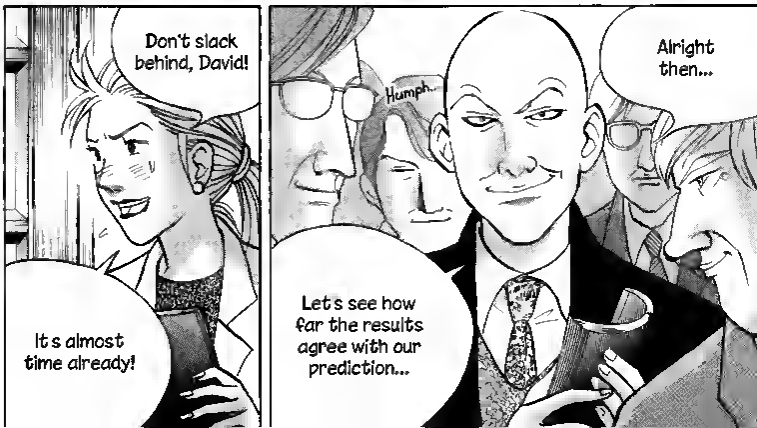
I come right after Adamski!!
ドクン
If it's by alphabetical order...
Then Shuhei should be called right after Adamski...

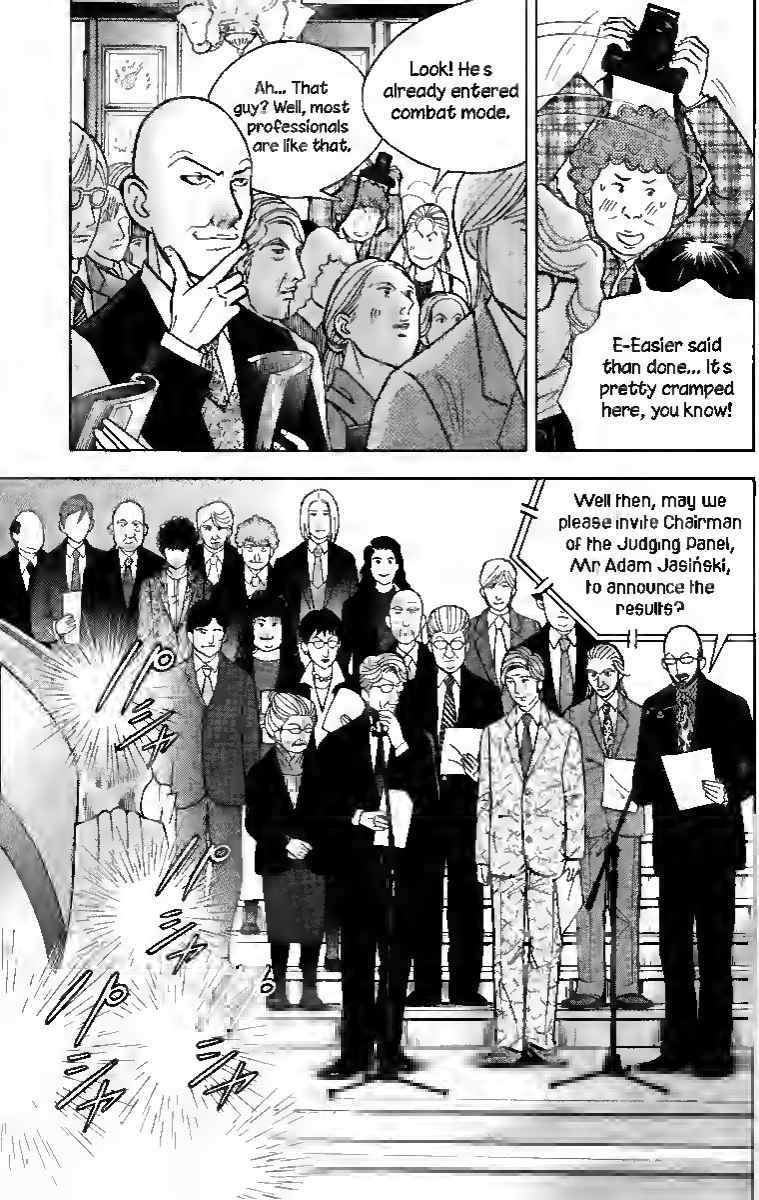

Don't worry! They'll definitely call my name!
ドキドキ

Then it'll be Amamiya Junior...
2
Shuhei AMAMIYA
Japanese ■ Japan
If it's by alphabetical order, No.1 is going to be Karol Adamski...
1
Karol ADAMSKI
Polish ■ Poland


And I'll be the fourth!!
4
Chang Woo AN
Then I'll be the third one!!
3
Chang Soo AN




Don't slack behind, David!
It's almost time already!
Humph..
Alright then...
Let's see how far the results agree with our prediction...


Look! He's already entered combat mode.
Ah... That guy? Well, most professionals are like that.
E-Easier said than done... It's pretty cramped here, you know!
Well then, may we please invite Chairman of the Judging Panel, Mr Adam Jasiński, to announce the results?

Well, then...
I shall now announce the 30 semi-finalists.
I thank you all on everyone's behalf...
for giving us the pleasure of listening to your Chopins.
I'm sure all 80 contestants are exhausted
All the contestants, including those of the preliminaries, are children deeply in love with Chopin.
Never forget your love and pride, and keep on learning... understanding... and playing with "Chopin's Heart" in the future.

My name will definitely come after Adamski!!
It's okay!
ドン!
The first name is going to be "Karol Adamski".
Don't miss the moment of pressing the shutter!
ドン!

*HYUNG = KOREAN FOR ONII-SAN = BIG BROTHER

No.2
Shuhei Amamiya,
Japan.
Ah...
Shuhei
!!

No.19
Luis Dahl,
USA.
No.15
Joseph Chan,
Canada.
No.16
Aleksey Chernov,
Russia.
No.9
Marek Balazs,
Poland.
Eh?
W...What about
Adameki...?

No.3
Chang-Soo An,
Korea.
No.4
Chang-Woo An,
Korea.

No.22
Evgenii Dmitriev,
Russia.
No.25
Monika
Dukaczewska,
Poland.
No.31
Jan Gardocki,
Poland.

Eh?!

No.37
Kai Ichinose,
Japan.
No.44
Satoru Mukai,
Japan.
No.45
Sophie
Ormesson,
France.
Eh? Was I called or not?
No.48
Wei Pang,
China.
Sigh... If you two are this worried, you should've just gone with him...
But he should also have called us if the announcement was delayed, right?!
Yeah... You're right...
May... Maybe something bad did happen...
He'll call us if anything happens. Didn't you say so yourself?
30/80 End

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PIANO NO MORI

by ISSHIKI Makoto
一色まこと

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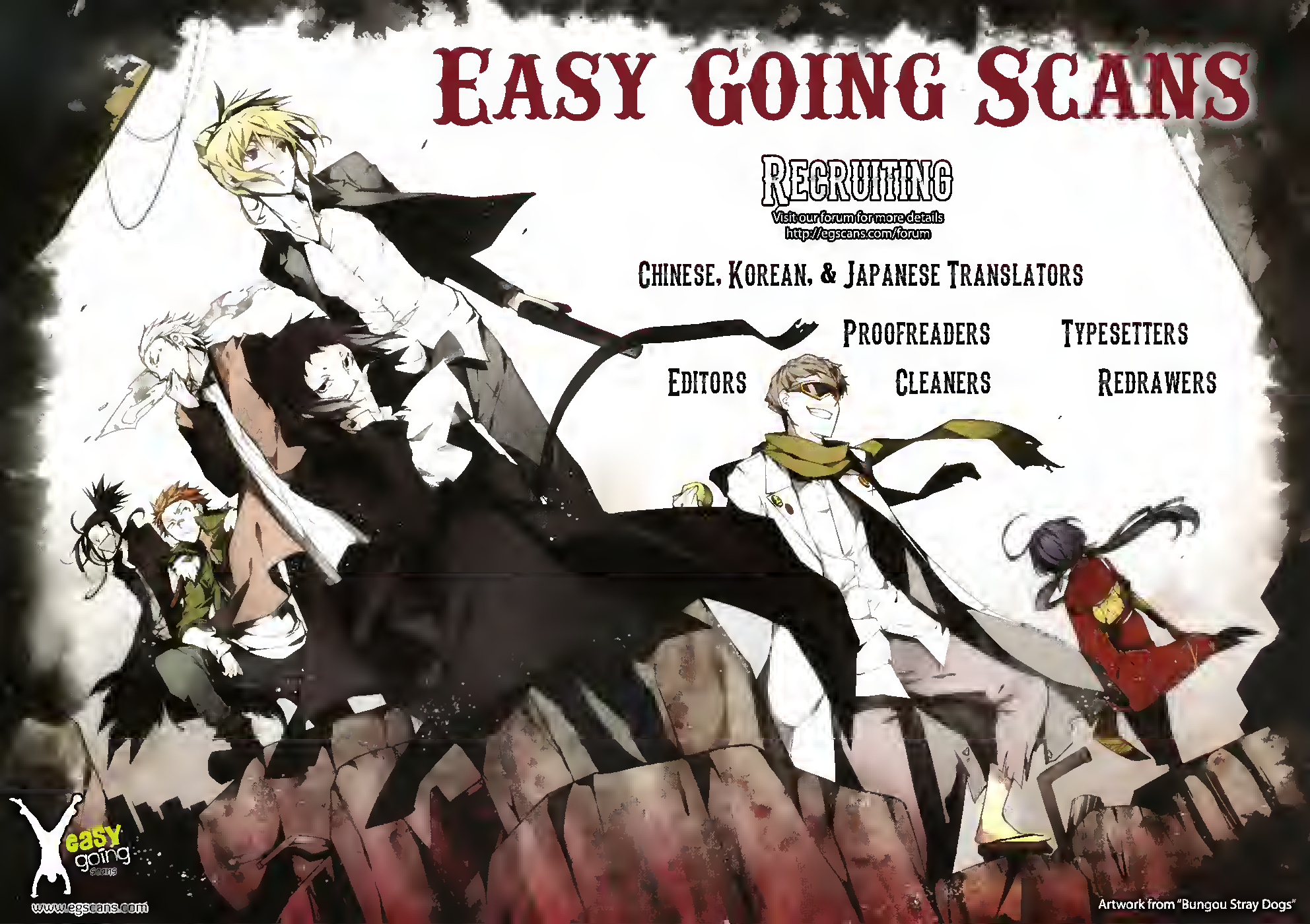
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Chapter 147

Speculations

... And these are the thirty who passed.

I...
Eh?
Congratulations to the thirty of you who made it through.
We look forward to seeing you in Round 2 on the day after tomorrow.
And our sympathy goes to those who haven't been chosen. We judges are also deeply troubled for not being able to select some of you.
I wasn't called...??!!

That's it for the announcement of the results of the First Round.
We will now post the list of semi-finalists by the hall entrance. Please confirm the names over there.
I can't believe it! Karol is...
Unbelievable! Why...??

Eh...
Was I not called?
Was I called?
Which one was it...??
Whi...

He made it! he made it, Kai made it!!
He made it!!!
Kai passed the first round!!!
I'm sorry, I let you worry!
Eh? I wasn't worried at all.
My friend, Ichinose Kai, has passed the first round!!
Tamakaji-sensei, he made it!
Even a no brainer could tell he's gonna make it after listening to that performance.
Besides, out of the 30 who passed, 6 are Japanese. This is quite amazing, but...
I still can't believe it...

This is big, Victoria!
Adamski is out.
No way... Karol Adamski didn't make it...?
Even with that performance?
Eliminated?!
That piano??
Karol!
Karol!

There must have been a mistake!
You shouldn't have failed with that kind of performance!!
Hey, Karol, are you alright?
There's no mistake, Simon!
Looks like I really wasn't called.
Just leave it, Simon. It doesn't matter either way.
It won't change the fact that I can longer play the piano here.
No, there must be something wrong here!
The judges must've done something!!

Even if I can't change the results, I can still impeach them!
I will expose the truth and put pressure on them with a public outcry!
So please, Im begging you. Don't make a big deal out of it!
Don't be silly! What do you think my job is?!
Damn.
What truth? You're just a gossip tabloid...
It's no use, Simon!
No use, my ass!

Please give us a few words, Mr. Adamski!
How are you feeling right now?
I'm sorry for interviewing you at a time like this...
But may I have a word, Karol?

Thank you. I'm glad to have survived this round!
Haha... Yeah.
You've taken your first step... Congratulations.
Ahh... I'll admit, I was a bit nervous.

Congra-tulations! I am from "Celebrity Monthly"!
Share your joy with us!
Ah, no... The joy is just for now.
There will be many more challenges ahead.
I'm feeling incre-dibly scared.
Quite the contrary...
I can't enjoy this moment at all. I feel relieved, but I just can't feel any genuine joy...
I...
This is a competition...
where even Adamski, the star of Poland, can fall... just like that.
Ah...

A star...
has to face cameras even at a time like this?!
Adamski!!
Adamski... I...
I'm scared!

We took a long time,
since there were so many contestants in the first round...

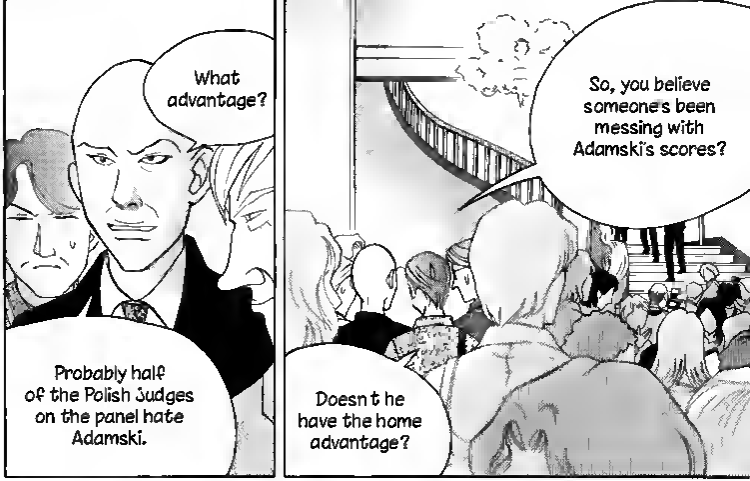
Mr. Jasiński!

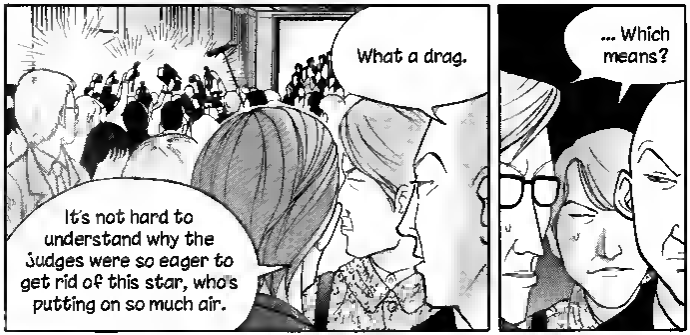
I'm Simon Hausner from "Tablizer".
I would like to ask why Karol Adamski wasn't allowed to pass!

I can't handle it anymore!!

I just can't think of any justifiable reason.
Please give us an acceptable explanation!
Da... David! Things are getting explosive!
Aw aw... Stop pushing!

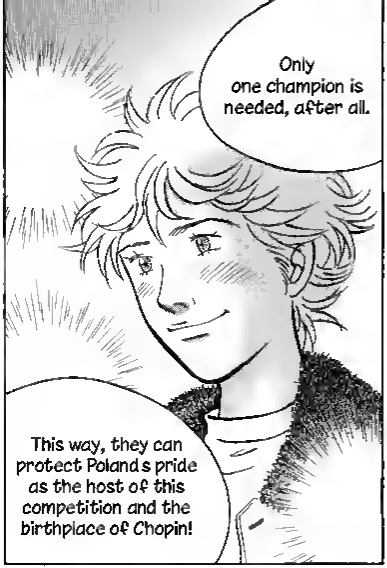
We have already prepared a venue for the press conference upstairs. So please save your questions till then!
Then, I shall answer your question in 20 minutes, Mr. Simon Hausner.
There'll be a press conference on the second floor!
Huh? Is that all?
Not bad, Jasiński...
Humph.


What advantage?
Probably half of the Polish Judges on the panel hate Adamski.
So, you believe someone's been messing with Adamski's scores?
Doesn't he have the home advantage?


What a drag.
It's not hard to understand why the Judges were so eager to get rid of this star, who's putting on so much air.
... Which means?

Adamski has never been tutored by any of these teachers. He's a self-taught genius!
So to acknowledge a kid like that would be no different from undermining their own raison d'être.

Adamski's bad luck in this competition was caused by the appearance of the "New Star of Poland"!
That's right! That's exactly the problem!
That ridiculous! We all heard his performance!
Poland lost her most hopeful winner for such a stupid reason?!
Ah!
Eh?
Lech Szymanowski?!


Only one champion is needed, after all.
This way, they can protect Poland's pride as the host of this competition and the birthplace of Chopin!

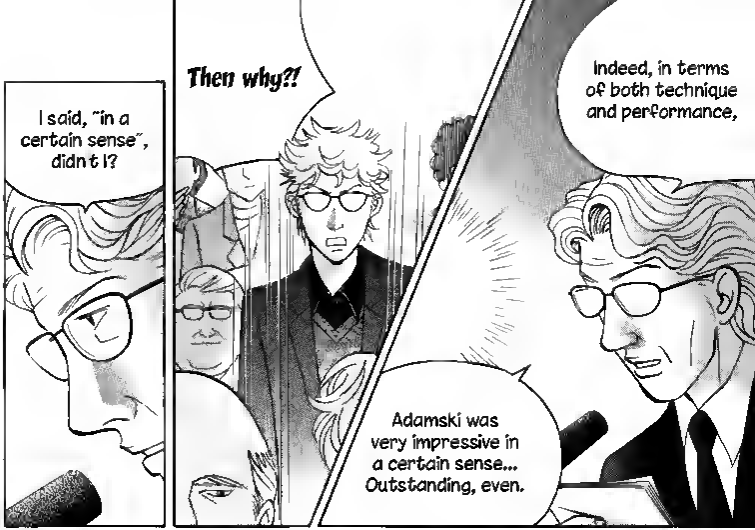
Exactly!
Lech Szymanowski, Poland's beacon of hope, has appeared.

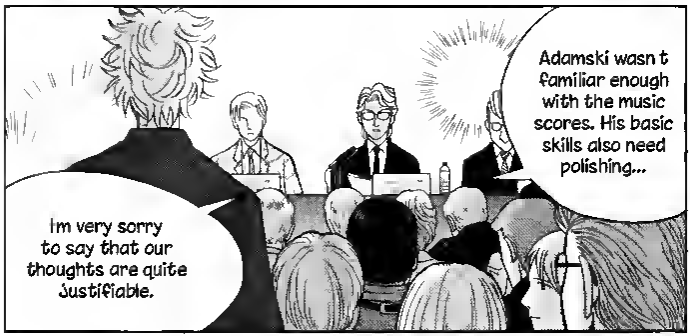
That's why they have no qualms about dumping Poland's star.

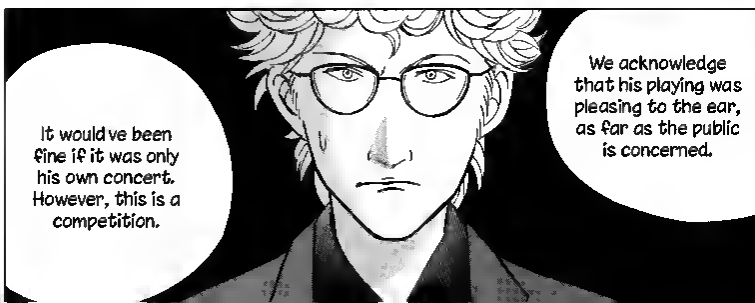
For the sake of letting Szymanowski win, they have to get rid of the stor, which could become a hindrance.

... would make a nice article. What do you think?

Whether it's true or not... We'll never know. We'll always be in the dark!
But if I go back to the hotel and start writing now, we could have it published in the morning papers tomorrow.
No... Only speculations on my part!
Jacek, is that really the reason why Adamski was eliminated?!
Whoa! Why is it so crowded here...
Ja... Jacek!
What about the press conference?
Go on your own. I have no time for that kind of farce, thank you very much.


Then why?!
I said, "in a certain sense", didn't I?
Indeed, in terms of both technique and performance,
Adamski was very impressive in a certain sense... Outstanding, even.


Adamski wasn't familiar enough with the music scores. His basic skills also need polishing...
I'm very sorry to say that our thoughts are quite justifiable.

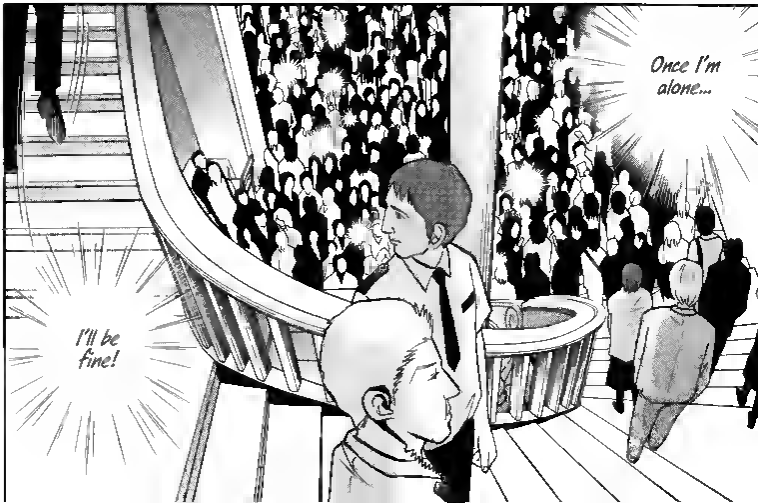

We acknowledge that his playing was pleasing to the ear, as far as the public is concerned.
It would've been fine if it was only his own concert. However, this is a competition.

A farce, I see.
A farce, indeed.
Adamski's score almost made the cut. The difference was very small.
We've reviewed it time and time again, but...
Such is the result yielded by the score ranking, disappointing as it is.
I have only made it past the first round, for god's sake...
Seriously... How long are they going to keep up this ruckus...
I want to go home!
I have to start preparing for it...
The second round will begin the day after tomorrow...

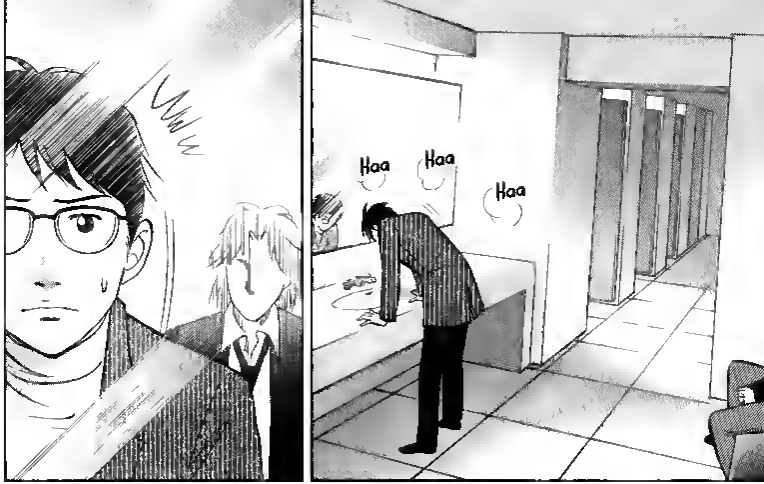
Father!!
Erm... No... I just need the restroom...
Are you tired?
What's wrong, Shuhei?
Why do I feel so unsettled?
Is Father just gonna keep laughing like this the whole night?
I'm...
so anxious I could collapse...
What should I do, Father?

I must hurry...
The crowd is bewildering...

to a place where I can be alone...
Shuhei Amamiya


Once I'm alone...
I'll be fine!

Adamski's failure...
My anxiety will be gone!
tap tap tap...
has nothing to do with me.
I'm not the same as Adamski!!
Haa Haa
That's right...



Speculations END

CHAPTER 141

ALLEGRO APPASSIONATO

→ quick and passionate.
Derived from the Italian word "Allegro", which means "cheerful". However, it simply means "quick" and "brisk" in the musical context. That's why it's also used in somber pieces - Prelude Op 28 No.24 is still Allegro even though it's tragic song that moves people to tears.
"Appassionato" means passionate.

CHAPTER 142

PASSAGE

→ bridge. A group of notes shifting upwards or downwards, for example, in the form of scales or arpeggios.

FFF/FORTISSISSIMO (FORTI FORTISSIMO)

→ extremely powerful. More so than ff (fortissimo).
There is no limit to how many f (forte) and p (piano) one can put together. Depending on the theme, there may be up to 4, or even 5. However, fff isn't double the strength of f, nor is fff triple the strength of f. It is a relative concept with regards to the theme.

"LOWEST" D

→ the lowest D note on the piano keyboard (furthest on the left)

CHAPTER 144

LONG-THIBAUD/CONCOURS INTERNATIONAL DE PIANO ET DE VIOLON*
MARGUERITE LONG - JACQUES THIBAUD

→ Long-Thibaud International Piano and Violin Competition. Created by pianist Marguerite Long and violinist Jacques Thibaud in 1943. Held in Paris, France. One of the most authoratative competitions in Europe.

*QC/N THIS VOLUME WAS PUBLISHED IN 2009 SO THIS INFORMATION IS ALREADY OUTDATED. THIS COMPETITION WAS RENAMED LE CONCOURS LONG-THIBAUD-CRESPIN IN 2011 IN HONOR OF THE DEATH OF FRENCH SOPRANO RÉGINE CRESPIN AND HAS SUBSEQUENTLY INCLUDED OPERA SINGERS AS CONTESTANTS.

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